RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL TERRORIST ATTACK PREPAREDNESS

by

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Liberty University

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Of the Requirements for the Degree

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ABSTRACT

Michael W.M. Dube. RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL TERRORIST ATTACK PREPAREDNESS. (Under the direction of Dr. Kathie C. Morgan) School of Education, October 2012.

This study examined the state of safety and terrorist attack preparedness in Rhode Island Schools as determined by Rhode Island school leader perceptions. The study is descriptive in nature as it gathers data to describe a particular event or situation. Using a researcher generated survey based on terrorist preparedness guidelines and suggestions in part from the Department of Homeland Security (2007), U.S. Department of Education (2007), National School Safety Center (2005), and National Association of School Resource Officers (2005), Rhode Island school administrators were asked to use a Likert rating scale to indicate levels of agreement with accepted terrorist preparedness strategies. Field testing was conducted to increase content validity and the statistical internal reliability of the instrument was calculated to have a reliability coefficient of .95 as calculated using Cronbach’s Alpha. The responses of Rhode Island school administrators (N=100) were examined and the study suggests that Rhode Island schools have potentially significant gaps in school safety and terrorist attack preparedness.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The volatile state of the world at this time has created a situation where the issue of terrorism impacts all of society in some way on a daily basis. The events of 9/11 have changed the world and have opened the eyes of Americans to realize that the United States is not impervious to attack. The daily reminders of national terrorist alert levels, increased security in almost every venue, and the constant bombardment of the news media, present a world that is very different than before the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Additionally, events in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere, continue to show the world as a place that is unpredictable, requiring conscious thought for safety preparation in every area, including education institutions. Americans can no longer take for granted that they are safe from harm within the borders of this nation or that schools would not be viable targets of attack for those wanting to harm the United States of America, its citizens, or their way of life.

Background

The terrorist attack preparedness study is an examination of the current state of Rhode Island schools with regard to terrorist attack preparedness. The first chapter of the proposal introduces the study, including the study background, the problem statement, and the professional significance of the study, an overview of the methodology, and definitions of significant words or phrases.

There have been numerous reminders over the course of recent history for the necessity of staying focused on school security and safety issues. Much of the focus on school security issues and school violence began with the 1999 Columbine, Colorado
tragedy where two teenagers shot and killed 12 students and a teacher before killing themselves. This terrible act put a spotlight on the issue of school safety. Other school violence issues continued to point to the need to take seriously the issue of school safety. In May of 1999, six people were injured by a student in a Georgia shooting. On November of 1999, a 13 year old girl was killed by a classmate in New Mexico. In 2001, a student in California shot and killed two of his classmates, and in 2002 at Virginia’s Appalachian School of Law, the dean, a professor, and another student were killed by a student gunman. Two school shootings in 2003 and 2004 caused two more deaths and four injuries. In Minnesota, in March of 2005, a student killed nine and then himself, and November that same year saw the death of another school administrator and two additional students injured. In October of 2006, ten girls were shot in a West Nickels Mines Amish school (Sunday Times, 2007).

The tragic death of 33 people in 2007 on the Virginia Tech campus showed the propensity for school terror attacks to have widespread impact (New York Times, 2007). The Virginia Tech shootings were not only the most deadly in U.S. history, but they caused an uneasy fear in and around the nation’s colleges and universities and once again, brought school safety to the forefront of the national spotlight. Since the Virginia Tech shootings, there have been no less than 29 separate U.S. school shooting incidents. The worst of those attacks was in February of 2008 where six died and another 17 were wounded at Northern Illinois University (U.S. News and World Report, 2008). Violent acts continue to plague American schools and necessitate the need for planning and preparation with regard to safety and security.
In addition to domestic acts of school violence and terror, there have been numerous school attacks abroad, including the 2004 school terrorist attack in Beslan, Russia. In that tragedy, Chechen terrorists, closely connected with al Qaeda, killed 323 and wounded another 700 in an attack on the school (Abdullaev, 2004). The attack was politically motivated, but also clearly designed to be a source of terror. This particular attack is a prime example of the incredible potential for a school terrorist attack to be not only the cause of massive loss of life, but the source of an instillation of fear and panic, part of the goal of terrorism. An attack on an American school resulting in the loss of over 300 lives and 700 injuries, most of whom would be children, would temporarily devastate the American way of life and change the nature of school safety forever. It is critical that the educational community assess the current state of preparedness and take steps to close any gaps in safety procedure in preparation for acts of violence that may impact American students.

After several internal terrorist events in the 1990s, most state education departments began requiring schools to design and implement school crisis plans to deal with the potential for school violence (Collins, 2007). Most of these plans focus on preparation for a large scale violent attack on the school similar to that of the Columbine shootings. Additionally, issues such as natural disasters, fire, and intruder issues are generally addressed as part of the school crisis plan. Since 9/11, the school crisis plan should include preparation for issues of terrorism where terrorists specifically target schools to damage property and harm children within the schools (Delisio, 2006). Schools cannot be overlooked as potential terrorist attack targets as they present a
powerfully symbolic attack opportunity on a vulnerable element of society (Dorn & Dorn, 2005).

In a 2007 statement, the U.S. Department of Education strongly encouraged every school to have an emergency management plan. As the National School Safety and Security Services (2007) organization indicated, terrorist attacks on schools would create a sense of fear and panic that would disrupt the economic and social aspects of American life. The goal of terrorism is to cause disruption to what people perceive as normal life, create a sense of fear and panic, and to have victims question what they believed in the past to be reliable and true. The Department of Defense (n.d.) defines terrorism as “the unlawful use of -- or threatened use of -- force or violence against individuals or property to coerce or intimidate governments or societies, often to achieve political, religious, or ideological objectives.” A direct or indirect terrorist attack on one of the nation’s schools would certainly send a shockwave of fear and panic throughout the nation’s educational institutions and would impact society at large.

Schools are viable targets for terrorist attack, as they house children in large numbers and schools operate on very predictable schedules and timelines, making planning an attack at the most opportune time relatively easy. An attack on children, the most vulnerable element of society, would accomplish the very goal of terrorism: to create a situation of panic and fear that disrupts life. Even an indirect terrorist attack near a school has the potential to severely impact the children in that school. Proper planning and strategizing is important to minimize the potential effects on children even in cases when the attacks are not directly related to the school (Bartlett & Petrarca, 2002). The 9/11 attacks are a perfect example of the direct and indirect impact of terrorism on
children. Although the attacks were not directly perpetrated against schools, there were millions of children affected by that particular attack and they were impacted in a number of different ways.

In New York City, thousands were specifically impacted by the consequences and aftermath of the damage from the attacks on, and subsequent destruction of, the World Trade Centers. According to Bartlett and Petrarca (2002), four elementary schools and three high schools were within six blocks of the attack and were immediately physically impacted by the aftermath of the collapsed towers and buildings. Additionally, tens of thousands in the tri-state area were impacted, as parents from at least three states (New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut) were working in the World Trade Center buildings or in the immediate vicinity of the buildings. An additional countless number of parents and students were further impacted as parents from all over the country scrambled to pick students up at school, and school districts were required to make quick decisions regarding how the attacks were to be handled within their particular schools (Bartlett & Petrarca, 2002). Preparation and an assessment of the current state of school preparedness is a key to minimizing the potential for acts of violence in schools and for preparing to deal with acts of violence if they do occur.

School safety and security are elements of education that cannot be overlooked. There continue to be violent disruptions on school campuses pointing to the need to examine this issue. Additionally, the volatile world in which we live presents an environment in which school safety cannot be taken for granted.
Problem Statement

There are no studies and little field literature regarding the safety preparedness of Rhode Island schools with particular attention given to terrorist attack preparedness. This study is descriptive in nature as it describes the state of readiness for terrorist attack on Rhode Island schools based on data gathered from Rhode Island school leaders. The study addresses the following problem statement: Based on local, state, and federal school safety guidelines, to what level are Rhode Island schools prepared for potential terrorist attacks on or near school campuses? The study population consisted of school leaders in Rhode Island schools categorized as public, Catholic, and private independent. All Rhode Island schools serving any grades K-12 were included in the survey process.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to examine the state of Rhode Island schools with regard to safety preparation and terrorist attack preparedness. Rhode Island school safety preparation and terrorist attack preparedness was examined based on the specific responses to research questions formulated from local, state, and federal safety and terrorist preparation guidelines. The data utilized to address safety and terrorism issues was gathered by questionnaire from the perceptions and experience of Rhode Island school principals, those most intimately involved in building level issues.

Significance of the Study

This study will contribute to a clearer understanding of emergency preparedness issues in and around schools within Rhode Island and may be used as an example of school administrators’ perception of the current state of preparedness. The post-9/11 world has changed the way safety and security is viewed. Many state and federal
organizations have created and published guidelines and suggestions with regard to school safety (Providence Police, Department of Homeland Security, Rhode Island Department of Health, U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Homeland Security). Since 9/11, some of the guidelines have specifically targeted terrorist attack preparation. Although there have been studies regarding terrorist preparedness in schools (NASRO, 2005), the literature is incomplete as to the current state of preparedness in the researcher’s state of Rhode Island. Unfortunately, guidelines and suggestions often remain just that: guidelines and suggestions that are never put into practice. This study will assist in examining the actual state of implementation of the guidelines in Rhode Island and therefore will help assess the actual preparedness of those schools.

This study specifically identifies areas of perceived weakness with regard to school terrorism preparedness in order to provide a better understanding of the safety issues needing to be corrected. Once identified, those issues can be strategically targeted, addressed, and corrected. The study assists in identifying weaknesses and provides an opportunity to identify recommendations and suggestions for improving school terrorist attack preparedness in Rhode Island schools.

Other studies, including recent doctoral dissertations (Berg, 2009; Swiontek, 2009; Twomey, 2009), have been completed examining school crisis plans; although a specific examination of school safety and terrorist attack preparation in Rhode Island schools has not been completed. Other studies have more narrowly focused on school crisis plan examination in one school or one state (Goldman, 2008; Werner, 2007), but a preparedness survey based specifically on suggested guidelines for terrorist attacks has not been conducted for Rhode Island schools.
This study will ultimately contribute to the field of education by assessing the current protection level of students, identifying areas of weakness, and drawing attention to the potential need to make changes in education safety policy guidelines and/or safety enforcement for Rhode Island schools. Once areas of concern are identified, the proper approach to improvement strategies can be formulated and additional research can be conducted. If safety weaknesses, crisis plan issues, or terrorist attack concerns are identified, and steps are taken to address terrorist preparedness, Rhode Island students and school communities will be safer than they were before the study was conducted and foundational work will be laid for additional research and study. During the survey portion of the study the researcher was personally contacted by many school administrators voicing an opinion as to the importance, significance, and value of such a study.

**Research Questions**

Research questions that address the purpose of the study are as follows:

RQ1. To what extent do Rhode Island schools have an adequate and comprehensive school crisis plan in place?

RQ2. To what extent have school crisis plans been developed and reviewed in conjunction with emergency professionals?

RQ3. To what extent are emergency crisis plans practiced and reviewed?

RQ4. To what extent do emergency crisis plans include:

   a. guidelines that coincide with a change in the federal color coded terrorist warning system?
   
   b. acts of terror?
c. procedures for communicating with parents and students, including those who are limited-English proficient?

d. procedures for recovering from an incident, including continuing student education during an extended school closure?

e. provisions to address special needs students?

RQ5. To what extent do schools receive adequate support and funding to be prepared for an emergency crisis situation?

RQ6. To what extent is safety and emergency preparedness training provided for faculty, staff and administrators?

RQ7. To what extent are schools prepared for an emergency crisis by providing:
   a. a classroom emergency crisis bag containing emergency supplies and information?
   b. several different means of communicating?
   c. adequate building and perimeter security?
   d. school blueprints and information to law enforcement?

RQ8. To what extent do administrators believe terrorist attacks are a possibility requiring preparation?

RQ9. To what extent do administrators believe schools are prepared for emergency crisis situations including acts of terror?

Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the following terms will be used:

- Administrator/Principal/Headmaster/Head of School- any public or private school official in the state of Rhode Island who is currently
employed within the state as a lead school official in a particular school, whether public or private.

- **School**- For the purposes of the research study, a school will be defined as any public or private school organization recognized by the state of Rhode Island as public, private (independent), or Catholic. Schools were included if they were responsible for any grades K-12. Other references to schools in the literature review may include other definitions of that institution.

- **Terrorism**- the Department of Defense (n.d.) defines terrorism as “the unlawful use of -- or threatened use of -- force or violence against individuals or property to coerce or intimidate governments or societies, often to achieve political, religious, or ideological objectives.” For the purposes of this study, the definition of terrorism also includes domestic acts carried out by individuals such as those perpetrated by the shooters at Columbine High School.

- **Zero-Tolerance**- the policy or practice of not tolerating undesirable behavior in schools, as it relates to this study particularly in reference to violent acts. This practice usually results in an automatic severe disciplinary penalty.
Research Plan

The research is descriptive in nature as it gathers opinions from Rhode Island school administrators relative to school safety, particularly focusing on school terrorist attack preparation. The opinions of the ground level administrators perhaps give the most accurate picture as to what level of particular safety preparedness strategies and techniques are being employed and assess the level to which these administrators believe their schools are prepared.

A school safety survey based on local, state, and federal guidelines for school safety and security was created. The initial survey was reviewed by eight experts in the areas of school safety and/or school administration in order to determine content validity. An additional 12 Rhode Island school principal reviewers brought the total to 20. The results of the first 20 surveys were utilized to establish content validity for the survey by calculating the Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficient. A reliability coefficient of .95 was established, well above the generally accepted minimum reliability coefficient of .70. The initial reliability data sheet can be viewed in Appendix C.

The researcher disseminated the surveys electronically to 527 school administrators in Rhode Island utilizing the state-published Rhode Island School Directory information and the web-based survey tool Survey Monkey. The initial electronic survey was sent to 527 school leaders in schools categorized as public, Catholic, and private independent. All Rhode Island schools serving any grades K-12 were included in the survey. The survey population was established at 486 due to duplication and/or inaccurate information on the
state-provided Education Directory. Ninety school administrators responded to the electronic survey through three rounds of distribution. The researcher utilized the Educational Directory to contact another 10 administrators by phone, at which time they agreed to complete The Rhode Island School Safety Survey, giving a return rate of just over 20%. Of the responses received, 52 were from public schools, 33 were from private independent schools, and 12 were from Catholic schools. Three school administrators chose not to categorize their particular school. Based on the school size information, the survey results represent a minimum population of between 26,804 and 50,253 students. The data was limited by the number of responses returned to the researcher.
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The body of literature regarding school safety and terrorism provides the basis and background for this study. The literature review chapter includes an examination of the theoretical literature and empirical research regarding school safety, paying particular attention to the school crisis plan and terrorism.

Theoretical Literature

A literature review of school safety issues must begin with the theoretical discussion of the relationship between school safety and security, and the ultimate goal of schools: teaching and learning. The literature clearly connects school effectiveness with school safety. Students must feel safe and be in a safe environment to reach their full potential in terms of learning. Research from the effective schools movement, which still impacts education theory, practice, and policy today, has consistently regarded school safety as a necessary component of quality and effective education. Edmonds (1982) noted that a safe and orderly school was a positive correlate of school effectiveness and a necessary component of creating an effective school environment and atmosphere. It is a necessary component of effective schools and students will not learn in an environment of fear (Lezotte, 1991). Other research in Great Britain by Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, and Ouston (1979) almost simultaneously confirmed the importance of a safe and orderly environment as a necessary part of creating an effective learning environment.

Paine (2006) indicated that effective safety and security measures both protect the physical safety of students and simultaneously promote an environment conducive to
learning. She indicated part of what schools specifically need to focus on is the
development of and regular review of school threat assessment and crisis plans.
Additionally, she indicates the need to develop effective relationships with local
authorities and the training of school staff in crisis procedures and building safety
matters. Anderson (1998) stated that the school climate, particularly with regard to
safety, is central to the school’s educational mission as it contributes to accomplishing
that mission. Research conducted by Bluestein (2001) indicated that safety impacts the
accomplishment of school work, achievement levels, and the propensity to engage in
behavior negatively impacting the school experience. He also reported that students who
did not feel safe at school were more likely to engage in negative behavior. These
students have a higher incidence of truant behavior, become distracted from school work,
engage in violent behavior, and have lower levels of educational achievement. Lintott
(2004) also reported that school violence made it substantially more difficult for students
to focus on the academic portion of the school experience and lowered the quality of the
classroom experience.

School safety is not just a physical matter; it is an emotional, psychological, and
intellectual matter as well. Studies from after the 9/11 attacks indicate a dramatic effect
on children within the immediate vicinity of the World Trade Center. Hoven, Duarte,
and Lucas (2005) reported approximately 30% of students within the vicinity of the
attack showed evidence of one or more anxiety disorders. Agoraphobia, separation
anxiety, and post traumatic stress disorder were identified as the most common disorders
among those students. Burnham (2007) indicated that since the 9/11 attacks American
students are significantly more fearful of “our country being invaded by enemies” and
“terrorist attacks.” Lindsey, Fugere, and Chan (2007) reported that college students were severely and negatively impacted psychologically and emotionally by the 9/11 attacks.

The threat and results of terrorism clearly have the ability to severely impact young people. Auger, Seymour, and Roberts (2004) indicated severe distress among students in the vicinity of the 9/11 attacks. Williams (2006) points out attacks on schools with even few victims can result in a large scale impact. School attacks generally garner much attention from both law enforcement and the media and can often create an increased sense of fear and panic. This extensive coverage often dramatically increases the impact of an attack and can reinforce a sense of fear as it is played over and over locally and even throughout the country. In that way, even a relatively small local attack can impact a large segment of society or even the entire nation.

Holmes, Creswell, and O’Connor (2007) reported that even students in London, thousands of miles from the 9/11 attacks, were impacted with PSTD symptoms and feelings that their lives were in danger, confirming the possibility of long reaching effects. Bosco and Harvey (2008) reported that five years after the 9/11 attacks America remained in a state of the reality of a world of “uncertainty and fear” and that we are clearly still living with the aftereffects of a terrorist attack. Chibbaro and Jackson (2006) indicated that “school-aged children in the United States are one of the most vulnerable populations in the event of a terrorist attack,” and they detailed a plan for school counselors to help students cope in the age of terrorism in which we live. It is not only important for schools to be prepared for an attack, but also for schools to help students be psychologically prepared to live in the world in which we now live, one in which such attacks are certainly possible.
Chen (2008) examined the impact of school climate relative to student achievement in 212 of New York City’s schools, particularly middle schools. The research showed that school climate directly impacts the ability and propensity of students to be engaged and successful in the learning process. The perception of having disorder or confusion in schools showed a high potential for negatively impacting students generally and for specifically impacting student learning. Ratner et al. (2006) reported increased feelings of safety were positively related to cognitive functioning. Additionally, their research indicated that increased feelings of safety may allow children to focus on critical tasks in school that they may otherwise not be able to complete.

Bucher and Manning (2005) call school safety the ultimate form of classroom management as it directly impacts the classroom and school environment by allowing students to focus on educational tasks with less fear and worry regarding their personal safety.

The issue of school safety and security is not just an issue of physical safety, but clearly one that contributes to, or detracts from, the overall learning process in schools. As such, school leaders should examine safety and security issues both from the perspective of physically protecting students, and from the viewpoint that school safety is an academic and specifically educational issue as well. It impacts the physical safety of the school community, the effectiveness of the learning process, and the academic achievement of those students within the school.

**Empirical Research**

The issue of school preparedness for terrorist attack is closely related with general school safety measures and the overall issue of school safety and violence. The
definition of terrorism as it relates to schools can include acts of violence from those within a school or from those outside the school but still impacting the school community and the students of the school. Sandoval and Brock (2002) identify several violent acts, such as drive-by shootings, sniper attacks, and bombings, as acts of terrorism in addition to terrorist attacks similar to and along the lines of those like the 9/11 tragedy. Although students in schools still remain relatively safe, crime and violence statistics do indicate some areas of concern.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2005), more than 72 million students will physically enter schools everyday in the United States. An additional 10 million staff and faculty members will also be present on a daily basis as well in American schools, bringing the total school population to approximately 82 million people per day. With this number of people coming together in concentrated locations each and every day, the potential for violent and/or criminal acts certainly exists. NCES (2006) reports that 96% of high schools, 94% of middle schools, and 74% of primary schools had at least one criminal incident during the school year. The Center for Disease Control (2006) reported that 6.5% of students indicated they had carried a weapon to school within the last 30 days, and 6% reported not going to school one or more days because they feared for their safety. According to the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice (2006) 7-9% of students are threatened or injured yearly by a weapon. There were 48 school-associated student deaths during the 2004-2005 school year, and 81% of public schools recorded at least one violent incident during the 2003-2004 school year.
According to Michael and Chris Dorn (2005), terrorists would likely target schools for the seven main reasons outlined below. Schools are considered soft targets for terrorism because they generally do not have the same level of security as other typical targets such as airports, government buildings, etc. This lessened level of security increases the ease and success rate of an attack. Schools at the elementary level and school busses are particularly vulnerable because they generally do not have more established security measures as may be more typically found at the high school level. Additionally, Dorn and Dorn (2005) note that schools are an extremely powerful terrorist target because of their symbolic nature. Schools and school busses house children which every element of society can and does identify with in some way. An attack on an American school would severely damage the notion that the most vulnerable element of society is safe and therefore would likely cause a sense of fear and panic.

Attacks on American schools potentially provide a relatively easy opportunity for mass casualties with the majority of those casualties being children. The gathering of large numbers of children is easily predictable at specific times and places each day in schools across the country. The ability to hit a target with the distinct possibility of maximizing human loss is an enticing opportunity for terrorists. The Dorns (2005) clearly indicate the need for school crisis plans to address the possibility of mass casualty incidents such as those caused by large-scale terrorist attacks on schools. In addition to the potential loss of life, the Dorns (2005) indicate the possibility of a particularly strong emotional response to an attack on children. This type of loss of life could cause society to feel a sense of helplessness and failure in fulfilling a primary societal responsibility to
protect those who can not protect themselves. An attack on children is also an indirect emotional attack on adults as they are responsible for the safety of those children.

The Dorns (2005) state that an attack on school children would probably cause incredible media coverage, which would greatly increase the negative impact of a school attack. Terrorists would benefit greatly from widespread, probably worldwide, media coverage, which would help to promote future attacks. Additionally, an attempt by the American government or law enforcement to intervene in an attack on a school has the potential to create a situation where the government may accidentally harm children. This is something that may help terrorists justify an attack or create another negative emotional response on the part of society. To the terrorist, schools are justifiable targets and a school attack is a justifiable way to further their objectives.

Most of the literature regarding school safety and terrorism issues remains largely focused on the school crisis plan. Central to the school crisis plan should be contingency plans, professional development for staff, and a coordinated effort between the school and the community (Thompson, 2004). Stephens (2006) articulates the need to review and update disaster plans, especially in light of events at Columbine, Red Lake Minnesota, Katrina, and of course the events at the World Trade Center with the attacks on 9/11. Contingency plans should contain multiple levels and address as many scenarios as possible. School leaders should address issues of preparation for terrorism prior to an event ever occurring. Preparations should have a three-pronged approach; working with parents and the community, working with staff and faculty, and working with students (Alpert & Smith, 2003).
A 2004 study conducted by Sally Dorman indicated 87% of American schools had emergency response plans, but only 47% had plans involving resources outside of the school. School crisis plans should include specific connections with community resources, such as local government officials, law enforcement, local hospitals, and fire and emergency personnel. In that same study (Dorman, 2004), terrorism was identified as one of the top four concerns administrators intended the emergency plan to address; although less than half had formal guidelines establishing connections with community resources. Krisberg (2007) noted that although most schools today do have crisis plans that include directions for evacuation procedures, fewer than 30% had actually conducted an evacuation drill to practice their policies. *Fire Engineering* (2004) blatantly stated that schools were simply not doing enough to protect American students, faculty, and the rest of the school community from the threat of terrorist attack. Redlener, Markenson, and Grant (2003) concluded that the United States is not prepared to a sufficient level to respond to another terrorist attack. A *School Planning and Management* article (2008) indicated that three-fourths of American schools are not able to adequately lock down in the event of an attack or other incident requiring a lock down type scenario.

Despite some bleak opinions regarding the state of school terrorist attack preparedness, there are others pointing to improvements in the area of school safety and security. Maxwell (2006) indicated clear and definite progress in the area of terrorist attack preparedness. Many schools reacted to the attacks in 1999 in Columbine, Colorado, by instituting safety strategies such as lockdown measures and coming up with better access control to school buildings and campus facilities. According to *District Administration* (2006), The Homeland Security Department distributed short wave radios
to all schools at a cost of over $5 million to assist in part with the dissemination of information relative to terrorism. Gewertz (2005) reported that New Jersey schools and New Jersey law enforcement officers teamed up in a plan to inspect and assess every school relative to their preparation for potential terrorist attacks. Additional school safety efforts include the fact that the U.S. Justice Department awarded more than $14 million in grants to enhance school safety and security in 34 different states. The funds will be used for items such as installing metal detectors, locks, lighting and other security equipment targeting increased school safety. The funds may also be used for security assessments and school personnel training that would make a significant improvement in school security (Curriculum Review, 2008). The federal government also awarded $27 million in funding for 91 of America’s school districts in order to help schools be better prepared for emergencies and specifically to help improve emergency management plans in those schools and districts (Fickes, 2008).

Although there is some positive movement in school safety and security, Maxwell (2006) still indicates there are substantial gaps in the relationship between schools and local emergency personnel that would be necessary to adequately protect schools in a large scale terrorist attack. Sharma (2004) suggests that schools need to be better prepared for terrorist attacks including safety and security training for both teachers and students. Kano and Bourque (2007) assessed California public schools with regard to their preparedness for emergencies and disasters. The results of a survey of 157 California schools indicated that most of the schools had experienced some type of emergency in recent years and that most generally felt well prepared, with a few areas identified as needing improvement. Specific limitations and areas of concern were
identified with the disaster plans, availability of supplies, training, and the coordination between various disaster response agencies.

Mitroff, Diamond, and Alpaslan (2006) reported that universities and colleges were generally unprepared for those crises that the schools had not been previously experienced. They were best prepared for those crises they had experienced the most. Additionally, Redlener and Berman (2006) conducted a study of national preparedness for natural and manmade disasters. The study particularly examined the response of the nation to the Katrina and Rita hurricanes. Although the incidents were not specifically related to terrorism, the researchers drew clear parallels with the general state of preparedness for emergency events. The study concluded that there was a national state of unpreparedness for emergency events such as terrorist attacks, despite frequent calls since the 9/11 attacks from different levels of the U.S. government to be prepared for such events. American School and University (2008) also reported that education professionals have noticed school security incidents are becoming more frequent and more severe. It is crucial that schools become more prepared to deal with security issues, violence, and potential terrorist attacks if we are to adequately protect American students and those in the school community.

According to the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, there has been at least one incident of school safety plans and school building schematics found in terrorist materials confiscated during a raid in Iraq. This is a clear indication that schools are a potential terrorist targets (SVRC, n.d.) and should demonstrate a clear need for serious attention to terrorist attack preparedness for schools in the United States. Additionally, the 2004 terrorist attacks in Beslan, Russia caused the Department of
Education to team with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Department of Homeland Security to put out guidelines helping to prepare schools for similar terrorist attacks on schools in the United States. In these school attacks, 1,181 people were taken hostage and 336 ended up losing their lives. The event caused many educators in the United States to take a look at schools as serious potential terrorist targets (Abdullaev, 2004). Again, the emphasis remained on the school crisis plan, but additional suggestions were made from lessons specifically learned in the Russian school terrorist attack.

American schools’ vulnerability to terrorist attack may be most evident based on a survey of school resource officers. School resource officers are police officers stationed within American schools specifically designated to provide an element of safety and security for the schools they serve. According to the National Association of School Resource Officers (2005), school terrorist attack preparedness is severely lacking and an issue of concern. Over 90% of police officers felt their schools were potential soft targets of terrorism. Over 76% reported their schools were not adequately prepared for terrorist attacks and over half did not have a corresponding change in school security measures as Homeland Security terrorist threat levels increased. The survey indicated that over 71% of the school districts did not provide any specific terrorist attack training for faculty and staff, and almost 47% of the school-based officers did not receive any specific terrorist training themselves (as cited by the National School Safety and Security Services, n.d.).

Trump and Lavarello (2003) indicated American schools are susceptible to terrorist attack and schools must take steps to increase security and protect U.S. students. They indicated a major role can and should be taken by school boards in assisting schools to be better prepared for a terrorist attack. School board members must take specific
steps to ensure school crisis plans are up to date and reviewed at least yearly. Additionally, Trump and Lavarello (2003) indicated that board members must see to it that staff is provided with ongoing training in the area of security and safety, particularly terrorist attack training. Schools must conduct drills at least yearly to examine current policies and procedure, to practice them and to make modifications if necessary. School boards should also take an active role in establishing and maintaining proper cooperative relationships with local officials and emergency personnel. Trump (2008) makes it clear that the current state of school preparedness for terrorist attacks requires better collaboration between public safety and community partners to help prepare schools to an acceptable level. Zehr (2004) reported that two of the largest school districts in the nation received failing grades for terrorism preparedness. A study completed by Green (2006) indicated that Illinois high schools overwhelmingly did have school crisis plans, but less than half indicated components of preparation relative to terrorism. Cavanagh (2004) states that some security experts believe school leaders have become complacent about school security since the Columbine attacks despite the terrorist attack tragedy in New York City on September 11, 2001.

According to Dorn (as cited in Defresne, 2005) terrorist attacks on schools in the United States are extremely rare. Only three specific school incidents have been recorded and none have involved terrorist activity from outside the United States. Two of the three involved violence from militia (Alabama and Wyoming) and one involved a sniper (the Beltway sniper in Washington, DC). Still, Dorn indicates that although rare, terrorist attacks on schools would be a very serious matter and it requires a detailed examination of the school crisis plan.
A well established and practiced school crisis plan should address most of the issues and responses that a terrorist attack would require. As indicated in most of the literature regarding terrorism and schools, the school crisis plan is a key to school crisis preparedness particularly preparation for a school terrorist attack. Pascopella (2008) adds that security experts agree the key to preparation after the creation of the crises plan is the practicing of emergency procedures, particularly the emergency and lockdown drills. Additionally, Dorn (2006) believes a tactical site survey is another key to identifying school safety issues and ultimately improves the quality of the educational process by helping to ensure students feel safe. Heinen, Webb, Moore, McClellan, and Friebal (2006) also noted that the addition of security technology, mainly surveillance equipment, had a positive impact on the school community’s perception of safety within the school. This in turn can positively impact the educational process and student learning.

A recent specific terrorist attack on a school does shed some light into the potential impact of a large scale school terrorist attack. On September 3, 2004, in the village of Beslan, Russia, 331 Russians were killed; over half the dead were elementary school children. Additionally, over 700 were wounded in the Islamic terrorist attack. The incident was lead by 20 Islamic terrorists closely connected with Al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden. This is particularly important to the threat of school terrorist attacks in the United States, as bin Laden had a clear desire to attack the United States and his followers still do. He has made several statements indicating that he believed an attack on children for the cause of furthering his agenda was, indeed, legitimate. This was clearly demonstrated in the Beslan attack and in several specific statements relative to the
permissibility of attacking children. According to John Callery (n.d.) of the Center for Advanced Defense Studies, schools are legitimate terrorist attack targets, specifically those where U.S. Congress’ children attend, as well as all schools in the Washington, D.C. area and schools in and around U.S. military bases. It is these types of schools in which an attack would create a great sense of fear and panic, the exact situation that a terrorist is seeking to create.

In response to the real and significant threat to American schools, Callery (n.d.) indicates the need to properly educate school systems, local and national governments, and police departments who are responsible for school security. It is critical that these organizations must convey a real sense to the world, and particularly to potential terrorists that American schools are informed regarding terrorist preparedness and that they are prepared. They need to convince the world that schools are aware of how to deal with potential terrorist attacks. This perception will help protect American schools. Callery (n.d.) also indicates that heightened awareness is not an instrument that creates unwarranted fear, as argued by some school safety and security opponents, but rather it reduces fear and improves preparedness. This reduction in fear and improved preparedness could result in many potential attacks being thwarted. Callery (n.d.) believes an attack on American soil similar to that of the Beslan school attack is one that could realistically happen at some point. Preparation, education, and awareness for this type of terrorist attack are the keys in preventing it from ever occurring in an American school.

In 2005 the National School Safety Center, established by George W. Bush by Presidential directive, released guidelines for schools in a post 9/11 world. These
guidelines reinforce previous suggestions for general school crisis plans, but add specific suggestions designed to address the potential for terrorist attack on American schools. The NSSC guidelines specifically target the unthinkable possibility of a terrorist attack on or near school campuses and provide suggestions to help schools prepare for such a tragic event. As a federally mandated organization with specific guidelines and suggestions for schools, the National School Safety Center must be included as part of the school terrorism literature review discussion.

In March of 2002, the Department of Homeland Security instituted a national advisory system specifically geared toward evaluating terrorist attack threat levels within the United States. The advisory system categorizes the national threat level using a five part color coded scale corresponding to various terrorist threat levels. Threat condition levels are assigned based upon current intelligence regarding potential acts of violence and terrorism, both specific and general. The graduated threat levels from least severe to most severe include; low threat level- green, guarded threat level- blue, elevated threat level- yellow, high threat level- orange, and severe threat level- red (United States Department of Homeland Security, n.d.). Each threat level corresponds to a different set of recommendations for local, state, and federal authorities, as well as for the American people. Threat levels should also correspond to varied levels of response by American schools. Homeland Security (2007) also issued a fact sheet concerning school safety in which school terrorism preparedness resources were listed and school safety suggestions were made. School safety preparedness suggestions included the development of a comprehensive emergency preparedness plan that was regularly practiced and created through a partnership with community leaders and local first responders. Additionally,
the U.S. Department of Homeland Security memo indicated a key recommendation for schools to create a team specifically tasked with identifying and intervening with students who may pose a risk of targeted violence at the school.

The United States Department of Education has produced a crisis planning guide to assist schools in adequately preparing and navigating the emergency planning process. The guide specifically addresses the need to be prepared for terrorist attacks upon the nation’s schools. It indicates a terrorist attack may result in; damage that goes beyond the boundaries of the school, victims who are potentially contaminated because of the attack, a crime scene to protect, and the probability of widespread fear and panic. As part of that guide, the Department of Education also has a suggested response for schools corresponding with the current Homeland Security designated terrorist threat level. Additionally, emergency planning guidelines are reviewed, including details on specific suggested components for the school emergency crisis plan (United Stated Department of Education, 2007).

The Department of Homeland Security has also taken steps to assist in the training of school personnel relative to school safety and terrorism. Some funding has been set aside as part of the train-the-trainer program. According to Kollie (2006) Homeland Security has instituted a program in Wisconsin schools to secure infrastructure, buildings and people against terrorism. The article also indicates that the director of Homeland Security believes this type of training is a valuable resource, as it not only prepares for terrorism, but makes people safer against other hazards as well. Many districts are focusing more on safety and security, and at least one school district in
Texas has now authorized teaching staff to carry weapons on school property with the proper training and permits (The Associated Press, 2008).

Since the events of 9/11 many law enforcement agencies have created specialized units to assist in the specific mission of gathering intelligence and focusing on terrorism preparedness in the United States. In 2002, the New York City Police Department realized it could no longer completely count solely on the Federal Government for issues relating to security and terrorism in the city. The response was to create the Counterterrorism Bureau of the department to specifically address issues of safety and terrorism within the city (New York City Police Department, n.d.). In Rhode Island, the Providence Police Department has created the Homeland Security Division of the department to coordinate homeland defense resources and protect the capital city of Providence from terrorist attack and activities (Providence Rhode Island Police Department, n.d.). Similar departments focusing on terrorism awareness and protection have been created by law enforcement agencies across the country.

The Rhode Island Department of Health has also indicated the need to prepare for potential terrorist attacks, including biological, chemical, and radiological type events. These events, although rare, must be part of crisis and emergency planning. According to R.I.D.H., these manmade terrorist events are intended to “produce fear and general distress in the community” (Rhode Island Department of Health, 2004). The department references biological attacks, including the intentional spreading of disease such as smallpox and plague, as well as an attack involving biological substances such as anthrax, ricin, botulism, and tularemia. Chemical attacks including nerve agents such as sarin, soman, strychnine, and tabun must be considered potential terrorist attack choices.
for a chemical attack. The Department of health notes that radiological attacks could include the use of a dirty bomb, nuclear bomb, or an attack on a nuclear power plant.

A United States Government Accountability Office report (2007) based on the testimony of Corneilia Ashby, Director of Education, Workforce, and Income Security, outlines the status of school districts’ planning and preparedness. According to the report, there is no federal law requiring school districts to have emergency management plans, but many states do still require such plans. The G.A.O. survey revealed that 32 states require a written emergency management plan through either state laws or state education agency policies. Rhode Island is one of the 32 states requiring a written emergency plan for each school in the state.

As part of that same G.A.O. report (2007), emergency preparedness recommendations from the Department of Education, Department of Homeland Security, and Health and Human Services were compiled. There were certain commonly recommended practices including those listed below as part of Table 1.

Table 1

Selected Practices that Education, DHS, and HHS Recommend School Districts Take to Prepare for Emergencies

Recommended practices:

- Allocate time to emergency management planning.
- Conduct an assessment of vulnerabilities.
• Conduct regular drills.

• Identify and acquire equipment to mitigate and respond to emergencies.

• Identify a storage location and replenish emergency supplies on a regular basis.

• Develop an emergency management plan and update the plan on a regular basis.

In developing and updating this plan, school districts should:

• Identify and address a range of events and hazards specific to the district or schools.

• Develop roles and responsibilities and procedures for school community members.

• Develop roles and responsibilities for first responders and community partners.

• Develop procedures for communicating with key stakeholders such as parents and students, including those who are limited-English proficient.

• Develop procedures for special needs students.

• Develop procedures in the plan for recovering from an incident, including continuing student education during an extended school closure.

• Determine lessons learned after an incident or training.

• Develop multi-purpose manuals, with emergency management information, that can be tailored to meet individual school needs.

• Include community partners such as local government and public health agencies in planning.

• Coordinate the school district’s emergency procedures with state and local governments.
• Practice the emergency management plan with first responders and community partners on a regular basis.

(U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2007)

The findings of the GAO study (2007) and survey found that many school districts are taking steps to prepare for emergencies including the creation of emergency plans that address a wide range of crisis situations. Approximately 86% of urban schools and 70% of rural districts reported including specific components to prepare for terrorist attack incidents on the school. That same study also found that many plans do not include or address the federally recommended school preparedness practices. Two specific areas of weakness included the lack of planning to continue education in the event of a long term closure and the lack of planning to address the specific issues of special needs students in a school crisis situation. Less than half of the public school districts surveyed indicated that community partners were involved in the development and updating of emergency crisis plans. The survey also concluded that public school districts are not adequately utilizing local first responders as part of the implementation of district safety and crisis plans. Many of the surveyed districts indicated difficulties in emergency planning and approximately 62% reported specific concerns regarding a lack of equipment, training for school personnel, and having access to experts in school safety and emergency crisis planning.

Rhode Island law requires schools within the state to provide a certain level of protection for pupils attending those schools (Rhode Island General Assembly, n.d.). Section 16-21-23 of Rhode Island education law broadly addresses the health and safety
of pupils. The law requires each town, city, and regional school department to adopt a comprehensive school safety plan which includes plans for crisis intervention, emergency response, and emergency management. The same law requires the plan to be developed by a school safety team which specifically includes a broad cross-section of school community members. The law indicates those members should include both professional safety and emergency personnel, such as fire and police officials, as well as representatives of the school committee, parents, students, teachers, and members of the school administration. According to 16-21-23, the school safety team should be appointed by the local school committee. Rhode Island General Statute 16-21-23 can be found as Appendix A.

Further details outlining school safety requirements in Rhode Island come from section 16-21-24 of the Rhode Island general statutes (Rhode Island General Assembly, n.d.). This section specifically focuses on the details of the requirements for school safety plans and school emergency response plans. The law enumerates a number of requirements including the partial list below. The full details of Rhode Island 16-21-24 outlining emergency crisis plan requirements can be found in Appendix B.

- Policies and procedures for annual school safety training and a review of the school crisis response plan for staff and students
- Policies and procedures for the safe evacuation of students, teachers, and other school personnel as well as visitors to the school in the event of a serious violent incident or other emergency, which shall include evacuation routes and shelter sites and procedures for addressing medical
needs, transportation, and emergency notification to persons in parental relation to a student

- Designation of an emergency response team comprised of school personnel, local law enforcement officials, and representatives from local regional and/or state emergency response agencies, other appropriate incident response teams including a school crisis response team, and a post-incident response team that includes appropriate school personnel, medical personnel, mental health counselors, and others who can assist the school community in coping with the aftermath of a violent incident

- Procedures for assuring that crisis response and law enforcement officials have access to floor plans, blueprints, schematics, or other maps of the school interior and school grounds, and road maps of the immediate surrounding area

- Establishment of internal and external communication systems in emergencies

- Procedures for review and the conduct of drills and other exercises to test components of the emergency response plan

**Literature Review Summary**

The 9/11 attacks have forever changed the ways in which most Americans will view safety and security in this country. This is true of school safety and security as it is true in other sectors of society. An examination of the literature regarding school safety and terrorist preparedness clearly indicates and acknowledges that the protection of students is a primary responsibility of schools. It is necessary for schools to protect the
physical safety of students as they are under the care of the state or of a private organization. Additionally, school safety preparation and plans are important to help instill a sense of calm and confidence in the school community. Research clearly demonstrates a link between creating an environment where students feel safe and providing an atmosphere where students can learn and succeed to their full capacity.

Every day in this nation a huge population of students enters the doors of schools, and as such, they become locations requiring protection and demand well planned safety procedure. Since the goal of terrorism is to disrupt life and cause fear and panic, schools automatically must be considered potential terrorist attack targets. An attack on large concentrations of children would breed the type of fear and panic intended by terrorists. There have been many school safety studies conducted, often giving conflicting reports of the state of the nation’s schools with regard to safety and terrorist attack preparation. Most school safety issues and studies focus on the development and implementation of a properly formulated and well thought out school crisis plan. The school crisis plan is the document that will drive the response to a potential attack and will help schools prepare for that attack before it might occur. Evidence suggests that many school districts do have school crisis plans in place, but the degree to which those plans include recommended components and are regularly practiced is less impressive.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this descriptive study was to examine safety and terrorist attack preparedness in Rhode Island schools. It is hoped that information from the study can assist Rhode Island schools in determining preparedness strengths and weaknesses and therefore facilitate improvements to school safety within the state. Schools are considered soft targets for terrorism because they generally do not have the same level of security as other typical targets such as airports, government buildings, etc. This lessened level of security increases the ease and success rate of an attack. Schools are an extremely powerful terrorist target because of their symbolic nature (Dorn, 2005) and therefore it is essential that Rhode Island schools and students be protected and prepared in case of such attack. The Rhode Island Department of Education School Directory indicated the 2010 public school student population to be 143,793 in grades K-12. There are an additional 13,346 students who attend Catholic or Parochial schools. Independent private school students account for an additional 8,262 students, for a total statewide Rhode Island student population of 165,401 students in 2010.

Introduction

As a descriptive qualitative study, the research reported in the study contains empirical results to the study survey administered to Rhode Island school administrators. It is a snapshot of the state of terrorist attack preparedness in Rhode Island schools. The target population to receive the survey included the building level head; whether administrator, head of school, principal, etc. The study was conducted through the use
of a survey created by the researcher based upon local, federal, and state school terrorism
and safety preparedness suggestions and guidelines. The survey was created based on
terrorist preparedness guidelines and suggestions from the Department of Homeland
(2005), National Association of School Resource Officers (2005), and the input of local
Rhode Island education and public safety professionals through pilot testing of the
survey.

Research Questions

The descriptive study utilized a survey designed to seek answers to the following
research questions:

RQ1. To what extent do Rhode Island schools have an adequate and comprehensive
    school crisis plan in place?

RQ2. To what extent have school crisis plans been developed and reviewed in
    conjunction with emergency professionals?

RQ3. To what extent are emergency crisis plans practiced and reviewed?

RQ4. To what extent do emergency crisis plans include:
    a. guidelines that coincide with a change in the federal color coded terrorist
       warning system?
    b. acts of terror?
    c. procedures for communicating with parents and students, including those who
       are limited-English proficient?
    d. procedures for recovering from an incident, including continuing student
       education during an extended school closure?
e. provisions to address special needs students?

RQ5. To what extent do schools receive adequate support and funding to be prepared for an emergency crisis situation?

RQ6. To what extent is safety and emergency preparedness training provided for faculty, staff and administrators?

RQ7. To what extent are schools prepared for an emergency crisis by providing:
   a. a classroom emergency crisis bag containing emergency supplies and information?
   b. several different means of communicating?
   c. adequate building and perimeter security?
   d. school blueprints and information to law enforcement?

RQ8. To what extent do administrators believe terrorist attacks are a possibility requiring preparation?

RQ9. To what extent do administrators believe schools are prepared for emergency crisis situations including acts of terror?

**Design**

The Rhode Island School Terrorism Preparedness study is qualitative descriptive study. The descriptive study is the appropriate design as the research intends to provide a specific description of the state of terrorism and safety preparedness within Rhode Island schools based on survey results from school administrators. Descriptive studies attempt to describe a particular phenomenon and generally report frequencies, averages, and percentages. Descriptive research often employs the use of surveys to sample a particular population (Glatthorn & Joyner, 2005). Borg & Gall (1989) also indicate that descriptive
studies attempt to find out “what is,” making survey methods appropriate to collect
descriptive data. Additionally, Glass & Hopkins (1984) indicate that descriptive research
involves gathering data that describes events and then that data is organized and
summarized to create a picture of that particular situation. The focus of this inquiry was
an examination of Rhode Island school administrator input with regard to state, local, and
federal guidelines concerning proper terrorist attack preparation and preparedness. These
guidelines were examined and adopted as the research questions for the study.

The Research Participants

The research participants were school administrators listed with the Rhode Island
Department of Education leading schools categorized as public, private (independent)
and Catholic. School administrators (or their designees) are considered the
representatives of each school and were the individuals who completed the survey. The
initial survey population was identified through the Rhode Island Educational Directory
and consisted of a total of 527 school leaders. Once duplicate and/or inaccurate
information on the state provided Education Directory was discarded, the survey
population dropped to 486 school administrators.

Setting

Based on information from the Rhode Island Department of Education (2012),
there were 142,854 public school students in 300 schools and 41 school districts in grades
PK through 12. Approximately 91,000 of those students were classified as white, 11,500
were classified as black, 31,000 classified as Hispanic, and 9,000 were classified as
another race. Approximately 44% of Rhode Island public students qualify for the
subsidized lunch program and 16% of Rhode Island public school students are receiving
special education services. Additionally, there were 26,003 students in 186 private schools serving students in grades PK through 12 (SchoolsK-12, 2010).

**Procedures**

The data collection instrument was designed based on suggestion from several agencies closely associated with the safety and security of school students in the United States and Rhode Island. The survey was designed with input from local education and safety professionals including school administrators, school safety officials, police officers, and fire department officials. This input assisted in the development of a survey that not only addresses broad safety suggestions, but also those specific to the unique challenges of Rhode Island schools. Once the survey was designed and tested it was administered to Rhode Island school principals. The survey participants were school administrators of Rhode Island in schools categorized as public, private (independent), or Catholic. The survey was administered through an email letter asking for participation and providing a link to the researcher designed Rhode Island School Terrorism Preparedness Survey. A copy of the participant letter is included as Appendix D. The survey was administered utilizing the web-based survey program *SurveyMonkey* (2009). Survey results were collected through the same web-based survey program.

The researcher electronically made surveys available to school administrators in Rhode Island utilizing the state published Rhode Island School Directory information and the web-based survey tool *Survey Monkey*. The initial electronic survey was sent to 527 school leaders in schools categorized as public, Catholic, and private independent as listed in the 2010 Rhode Island Department of Education Directory. All Rhode Island schools serving any grades K-12 were included in the survey population.
Once the initial survey population of 527 school leaders was identified through the Rhode Island Directory, the email letter and survey link were sent by email. The first deployment of the email survey revealed duplicate and inaccurate information in the directory and the survey population immediately dropped to 486 when accounting for the duplicate and/or inaccurate information on the state provided Education Directory. Ninety school administrators responded to the electronic survey through three rounds of distribution. The researcher utilized the Educational Directory to contact another 10 administrators by phone at which time they agreed to complete The Rhode Island School Safety Survey. Of the 100 responses received, 52 were from public schools, 33 from private independent schools, and 12 from Catholic schools. Three school administrators chose not to categorize their particular school. Based on the school size information submitted by school administrators, the survey results represent a minimum population of between 26,804 and 50,253 Rhode Island students. The data was limited by the number of responses returned to the researcher. Additional limitations may include an inherent desire for school administrators to want their school and/or district to be perceived as prepared for a terrorist attack, feeling that whatever response is given will in some way reflect on the administrator. This may present a bias in the responses of the school administrator sample.

**Researcher Background**

The background information for the Rhode Island School Terrorism Preparedness study includes the personal background of the researcher as it impacts the ability of the study to be conducted with an element of insight and experience relative to the topic at hand. The researcher has a background of personal experience and training in both the
education realm and the area of professional law enforcement. As a former municipal police officer for the city of Norwich, Connecticut, and a former Connecticut State Trooper, this writer has experience in the area of safety and security. The researcher was the top graduate of the Connecticut Municipal Police Training Course and the salutatorian of the 104th Connecticut State Police Training Troop. Additionally, the researcher brings 15 years of teaching and administrative education experience as both a certified public school teacher and private school administrator. Law enforcement experience combined with teaching and school administrative experience make the study of school safety issues one of interest for this author. A background in both criminal justice and education bring a unique perspective and experience to the study. The researcher was familiar with law enforcement and safety procedure as well as the intimate workings of school facilities and school procedures. Additionally, there was a familiarity with the literature associated with both. This unique background provided an opportunity for the researcher to use personal connections within the local law enforcement and safety community as well as the education community to receive input and assistance with the study including law enforcement reviews of the survey.

Data Collection

The data collection instrument is researcher created and was designed by examining guidelines suggested by the U.S. Department of Education, Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Homeland Security, the National School Safety Center, the American Red Cross, National Association of School Resource Officers, the Rhode Island School Emergency Planning guide, and consulting with local Rhode Island education and public safety professionals and experts. Based on that examination,
common guidelines were identified and categorized. Most preparedness guidelines revolved around suggestions for the creation of a comprehensive school crisis plan. Specific school crisis plan suggestions included: response when the federal terrorism warning status changed, the inclusion various school constituencies in completing the plan, the review and practice of the school crisis plan, as well as training regarding the school crisis plan. Other common guidelines included the need for general school security procedures as well as the importance of adequate funding to address the needs of school safety.

Common suggested guideline elements were combined into a Likert scale survey requiring school administrators to rate the performance of their school against the compiled guidelines for terrorist attack preparedness. The survey is included as Appendix E. It was field tested by a cross section of eight professional educators and public safety experts between August 1, 2009 and December 24, 2009. This pilot review gain feedback and increase survey reliability. Issues of concern, suggestions, and clarifications brought about through the survey field tests were included into the final version of the survey. This step was implemented as part of the research protocol to establish ease of understanding, clarity, and to strengthen the content validity of the instrument. All of the reviewer suggestions involved changing terms or phrases that may have made the survey statements unclear. Once the suggested changes were incorporated into the survey, the instrument was field tested again and all reviewers indicated that the survey was clear and that it was an appropriate instrument for determining the level of terrorist attack safety preparedness in Rhode Island schools.
The following list of experts reviewed the administrator letter and the study survey, providing feedback and content validity. All experts except one also took the survey and submitted results. Reviewer #4 did not submit results to the survey as she is not currently serving in an administrative capacity at a Rhode Island school.

Reviewer #1- Education Administrator, Academic Dean at Masters Regional Academy, a private Christian school in Smithfield, RI.

Reviewer #2- Education Administrator, Special Education Director for the public school district of Smithfield, RI.

Reviewer #3- Education Administrator, Director of School Operations (Including school safety and emergency crisis planning) and Student Support for the public school district of Providence, the largest district in the state of Rhode Island.

Reviewer #4- Education Administrator, former Principal (15 years) of Cranston Career and Technical School for the public school district of Cranston, RI.

Reviewer #5- Education Administrator, current Assistant Superintendent for the public school district of Smithfield, RI.
Reviewer #6- 21 year member of the Providence Fire Department, currently serves as an Assistant Deputy State Fire Marshal. A letter from Officer Lutz indicating his professional opinion of the survey is included as Appendix F.

Reviewer #7- 23 year member of the Smithfield Police Department, currently responsible for the department’s accreditation process and has involvement with school safety crisis plan review and school site safety review.

Reviewer #8- 26 year veteran of the Smithfield Fire Department, Assistant State Deputy Fire Marshall, currently serves as part of the fire prevention bureau as representative for local school emergency response committees.

After the survey was reviewed by the panel of experts, the survey was field tested by an additional 12 school principals to bring the initial field test total to 20. The results of the initial field test were quantified utilizing a scale of one to six with a score of one corresponding to the category “Strongly Agree” and the score of six corresponding to the “Strongly Disagree” category. These data were entered into a reliability calculator created by Dr. Del Siegle of the NEAG School of Education at the University of Connecticut in Storrs, CT. The statistical internal reliability measurement tool Cronbach’s Alpha was chosen to measure survey reliability. Cronbach’s Alpha is often used in conjunction with Likert scale surveys measuring participants’ attitudes (Siegle, n.d.). The Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficient was calculated based on the field test survey data and revealed a reliability coefficient of .95, well above the generally accepted minimum reliability coefficient of .70. Based on the values calculated using Chronbach’s
Alpha, the results were deemed reliable. The initial reliability data sheet can be viewed as Appendix C.

**Data Analysis**

The results for each Rhode Island Terrorist Preparedness survey statement were reported as the percent of responses categorized into each of the 5 Likert scale survey categories. Additionally, the twenty-five survey statements were then categorized into 9 research questions covering similarly focused areas of safety preparedness. As stated in the Handbook of Research for Educational Communications and Technology (2001), descriptive research and studies often simply report the percentage summary on a single variable. Additionally, Borg & Gall (1989) confirm that descriptive research only requires an investigation into one variable. The Rhode Island Terrorist Attack Preparedness study gathered data designed to produce an overall picture of the state of terrorist attack preparedness in Rhode Island. That picture was created through the gathering of administrator perceptions with regard to research based safety guidelines and suggestions. A subsequent report of the results utilizing basic descriptive statistics allowed for an analysis and discussion of results in light of those same research and literature based safety guidelines and practices.

**Trustworthiness**

The Rhode Island School Terrorist Attack Preparedness study utilized several research based techniques to increase the credibility and reliability of the study. The survey instrument was carefully created to coincide with research based safety guidelines as suggested by federal, state, and local entities including; the Department of Homeland Security (2007), U.S. Department of Education (2007), National School Safety
Center (2005), National Association of School Resource Officers (2005), and the input of local Rhode Island education and public safety professionals through pilot testing of the survey. Once the initial survey instrument was designed, it was examined and reviewed by 8 local experts to increase reliability and content validity. The input from the field test experts was incorporated into the survey and the final version of the survey was again submitted to the experts. All agreed that the survey was clear and that it tested what it set out to test.

After the survey instrument was reviewed by local experts, it was sent to another 12 school administrators as a field test to bring the initial survey test total to 20 participants. The initial field test data results were entered into a research study reliability calculator created by Dr. Del Siegle of the NEAG School of Education at the University of Connecticut in Storrs, CT. This reliability calculator utilized the statistical internal reliability measurement tool Cronbach’s Alpha to measure survey reliability. Cronbach’s Alpha is often used in conjunction with Likert scale surveys measuring participants’ attitudes (Siegle, n.d.). The field test data test resulted in a Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficient of .95, well above the generally accepted minimum reliability coefficient of .70. Based on the values calculated using Chronbach’s Alpha, the results of the survey were deemed reliable and trustworthy.

**Ethical Considerations**

The Rhode Island Terrorist Attack Preparedness Study presented minimal ethical concerns. Survey results and participant information was protected through the use of advanced internet security procedures and technology utilized by the survey provider. *SurveyMonkey* (2009) utilizes Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) technology to protect user
information using both server authentication and data encryption, ensuring that user data is safe, secure, and available only to authorized persons. The field test experts gave specific personal verbal consent to be listed as an expert reviewer in the study, although all names were left out of the final study version. It is possible to determine the identity of an individual expert based on the personal background information and locations provided, but again, all experts gave consent for their identities to be revealed as an expert survey reviewer. Additionally, the study research methods and procedures, together with the participant request email letter, were reviewed by Liberty University’s Institutional Review Board and chairman Dr. F. Garzon. Due to the extremely negligible level of risk to participants, the approved email participant letter was allowed to serve as implied consent to participate in the research study.
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS OF THE STUDY

This study presents data and evidence based on school administrator input that helps determine the level of terrorist attack preparedness within Rhode Island schools.

The problem statement being addressed was: *Based on local, state, and federal school safety guidelines, to what level are Rhode Island schools prepared for potential terrorist attacks on or near school campuses?* Strategically designed school safety questions were formulated to answer the problem statement based on input from local and federal agencies together with input from Rhode Island school security and education experts.

The survey results from school administrators, those most closely associated with the actual implementation of school guidelines and practices, helped formulate a current snapshot picture of the current level of terrorism preparedness in Rhode Island schools.

The survey helped gather data that can be used in further research and in providing information to help make changes that will improve the safety of Rhode Island schools.

This chapter presents the results of the research project.

The Rhode Island School Terrorism Preparedness Survey was completed in full or part by 100 school administrators in Rhode Island. The first four questions of the survey were labeled as “Part One” and were designed to gather demographic data regarding the category of school, the grade levels covered in the school, the size of the school student population, and the geographic categorization of the school as urban, suburban, or rural.

The second portion of the survey was labeled as “Part Two” and consisted of 25 questions specifically designed to gain input from school administrators regarding their
perception of school terrorism attack preparedness. The questions were researcher created based upon local, state, and federal school safety guidelines and suggestions, together with information from 20 expert survey review participants. The initial 20 review participants were safety, security, and education experts who examined the survey and provided input for improvement.

Data gathered from the responses to the four demographic questions in “Part One” of the survey provide background for the presentation of specific data from section two of the survey. Demographic information from the survey indicated that approximately 53% of the responses came from schools categorized as public schools. The remaining responses were from private independent schools (34%) and Catholic schools (12%). Schools participating in the survey combined to represent every grade level from K through 12, with kindergarten being represented in more schools than any other individual grade with a total count of 56 schools. Other grade levels represented in the responses were approximately evenly distributed, ranging from a high of 48 schools with grade three, to a low of 31 schools with grades ten and eleven. The largest percentage of responding schools, at 43, fell into the range of a student population of between zero and 250 pupils. Three schools fell into the largest population category with a population of over 1500 students each. The school population graph is included as Appendix G.

Based on the responses regarding student population provided by school administrators, the survey indicated that 56% of the schools were identified as suburban, 30% of the schools were identified as urban, and 13% of administrators identified their schools as being located in rural areas of Rhode Island. The responding schools represented a total student population of between approximately 26,000 and
approximately 50,000 or more pupils. The total Rhode Island school student population for all public and private schools is approximately 168,000 students (SchoolsK-12, 2010). Based upon the population represented in the sample, the Rhode Island School Terrorism Preparedness survey potentially represents data directly covering approximately 30% of the total student population in the state of Rhode Island, a significant representation.

**Survey Statement Results**

Part two of the Rhode Island School Terrorism Preparedness Survey contains 25 statements for school administrators relative to school safety and security. Administrators were told to choose the answer that most closely matches his or her perception regarding the particular school in question.

Statement one of the survey deals with perceptions regarding the state required school crisis plan. Statement one reads: “Our school has an adequate and comprehensive school crisis plan in place.” Overall responses to the question showed that 37.5% and 40.9% of responses fell into the “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” category respectively. Eighteen percent of responses fell into the “Agree More than Disagree” category. A smaller percentage of responses (4.6%) fell into a negative category as “Disagree More than Agree” or “Disagree”. The overall response rate can be seen as Figure 1.

When statement one is filtered with a demographic lens it becomes clear that there are some disparities among school types. Private schools indicated to a higher
Figure 1. Overall Survey Results Statement 1- Our school has an adequate and comprehensive school crisis plan in place.

degree of negative response to the overall statement regarding school crisis plans. Over 11% of private schools responding to the survey indicated they “Disagree More than Agree” or “Disagree” with the school having an adequate school crisis plan in place. Only one school in the public school category fell into the negative response range and no Catholic school was identified to have a negative response to the perceived adequacy of the school crisis plan. Those schools categorized as urban had the highest rate of negative response to statement one with 15% of urban schools responding that they could not fully agree that an adequate and comprehensive school crisis plan was in place.
The second statement of the Rhode Island School Terrorist Attack Preparedness survey referred to the usability of the emergency crisis plan. It stated, “Our school crisis plan is concise and easy to use in the event of an actual emergency crisis situation.” It is important that schools not only have a school crisis plan, but that the plan is usable and effective at accomplishing what it sets out to do. Based on the research survey results 33% of schools fell into the “Strongly Agree” category, 44% into the “Agree” category, and 18% into the “Agree more than Disagree” category. Negative results of either “Disagree More than Agree” or “Disagree” were logged for approximately 6% of the responding schools. Survey results for statement two are displayed in Figure 2. When
just private schools were included in the results the negative responses jumped to approximately 14% as compared to only 2% of public schools and no negative responses for Catholic schools. Additionally, all schools reporting a negative response to statement two were categorized as urban schools. No negative responses were recorded from administrators in schools categorized as rural or suburban.

The third survey statement addressed the manner in which the school crisis plan was developed. Central to the school crisis plan should be contingency plans, professional development for staff, and a coordinated effort between the school and the community (Thompson, 2004). To properly prepare for incidents such as terrorist attacks it is important that the effort be coordinated, particularly with emergency personnel. Overall survey statistics indicate a higher degree of concern for this particular facet of crisis preparedness. Just over half of the respondents were able to “Strongly Agree” with the statement. Approximately 34% of respondents indicated “Agree” or “Agree More than Disagree.” But, about 16% of administrators indicated that they could not completely agree with the statement. Nine percent disagreed more than agreed, about six percent disagreed, and one school administrator strongly disagreed with the statement.
Figure 3. Overall Survey Results Statement 3- Our school crisis plan was developed in conjunction with law enforcement, fire safety officials, emergency medical officials, as well as health and mental health professionals.

Overall results for statement three are displayed in Figure 3. When demographic filters are applied to the responses it is noted that approximately 30% of urban school administrators responded in the negative to statement three. Approximately 40% of private schools responded in the negative to having the crisis plan cooperatively developed with community involvement.
Figure 4. Overall Survey Results Statement 4- District and/or school officials meet yearly with police, fire, emergency medical services, emergency management agencies, and other public safety officials to review and revise the school emergency crisis plan.

The Rhode Island School Terrorism Preparedness Survey statement number four addressed a yearly review by safety officials and school leadership. The fourth survey statement was, “District and/or school officials meet yearly with police, fire, emergency medical services, emergency management agencies, and other public safety officials to review and revise the school emergency crisis plan.” The overall results showed that 26.1% of administrators strongly agreed, 13.6% agreed, and 21.6% agreed more than disagreed. Over 40% of the administrators responded with one of the three negative
categories; disagree more than agree, disagree, or strongly disagree. Overall results for statement four are displayed in Figure 4. When the school type category filter was applied to the statement and responses, it showed that almost 60% of Catholic school and 60% of private school administrators could not agree with the statement indicating there was a yearly review and revision of the crisis plan that involved safety and security officials working together with school officials. That same statement elicited a negative response rate of approximately 20% from public school administrators.

Regular practice of emergency crisis plans through school-wide drills is an important part of school safety preparation (Dorn, 2006). Survey statement five addresses the suggested regular practice of emergency procedures. It states, “Our school participates in regular emergency crisis drills including lockdown, evacuation, and shelter
Figure 5. Overall Results Statement 5- Our school participates in regular emergency crisis drills including lockdown, evacuation, and shelter in place.

The results of administrator opinions clearly showed an overall positive response regarding regular emergency drill practice. Almost 99% of all respondents indicated they could agree with the statement, with almost 72% indicating they strongly agreed. Overall results for statement five can be seen in Figure 5. Only one school, an urban public school, disagreed with the statement regarding conducting regular lockdown, evacuation, and shelter in place emergency crisis drills.
Figure 6. Overall Results Statement 6- Our school includes/included various school constituencies (teachers, administrators, students, and support staff) in the preparation and review of crisis emergency plans.

Survey question six asks school administrators to rate the degree to which they could agree that school crisis plans were prepared and reviewed by different constituents within the school. It states, ‘Our school includes/included various school constituencies (teachers, administrators, students, and support staff) in the preparation and review of crisis emergency plans.’ Over 90% of those surveyed agreed with the statement at some level. Thirty-nine percent strongly agreed, while 32% agreed and 19% agreed more than disagreed. Overall results of survey statement six can be seen in Figure 6.
Figure 7. Overall Results Statement 7- Our school has specific guidelines to follow when the federal color-coded terrorism warning system status changes.

Approximately 50% of public and Catholic schools strongly agreed while only 15% of private schools fell into that same category. Approximately 9% of school administrators overall were not able to agree with statement number six.

Survey statement number seven is the first statement on the survey where there is an overall negative response from school administrators. The statement is, “Our school has specific guidelines to follow when the federal color-coded terrorism warning system status changes.” Results of the statement showed that approximately 7% strongly agreed.
Figure 8. Overall Results Statement 8- Our school crisis plan specifically addresses acts of terror

with the statement, 12.6% agreed with the statement, and 16.1% agreed more than disagreed. On the negative side of the Likert scale was 13.8% who disagreed more than agreed, 37.9% disagreed, and 12.6% strongly disagreed. When all negative categories are combined, it can be seen that over 64% of respondents were not able to agree with the statement that their school changes guidelines to correspond with the federal color-coded terrorism warning system. The overall results of survey statement number seven can be seen as Figure 7. Demographic filter application to statement number seven showed that 91% of rural schools fell into the negative response categories while 65.4% of urban schools and 56.2% of suburban schools could not agree with the statement. Statement
disagreement by school type revealed that 74% of private schools could not agree with statement seven, 65.2% of public schools disagreed, and 41.7% of Catholic schools fell into the negative category.

The Rhode Island Terrorism Preparedness Survey question number eight addresses the inclusion of terrorism attack preparedness within the overall school crisis plan. It states, “Our school crisis plan specifically addresses acts of terror.” Almost 60% of respondents positively agreed with the statement with the largest percentage (26.4%) falling into the “Agree” category. Approximately 40% of school administrators responding could not agree that their school crisis plan specifically addressed acts of terrorism. Approximately 17% disagreed more than agreed, another 17% disagreed, and 4.6% disagreed with the statement. Overall results for statement eight are displayed in Figure 8. When the results are filtered by school type it shows that almost 67% of Catholic school respondents agreed with statement eight while 33% disagreed. Approximately 15% of private school administrators strongly agreed with the statement indicating they specifically addressed terrorism as part of the school crisis plan. Additionally, 22% agreed and approximately 26% agreed more than disagreed with the statement. Approximately 37% of Rhode Island private school administrators indicated they did not agree with statement number eight. Almost 60% of public school administrators agreed that they had specifically addressed terrorism as part of the school crisis plan. Approximately 20% disagreed more than agreed, 15.2% disagreed, and 6.5% strongly disagreed with statement number eight. The demographic location filter application shows that approximately 73% of suburban school administrators agreed they
Figure 9. Overall Results Statement 9- Our school crisis plan includes written procedures for communicating with parents and students, including those who are limited-English proficient had plans in place to specifically address school terrorist attacks. Approximately 54% of urban schools indicated agreement, but only 40% of rural school administrators indicated they had similar plans in place.

The ninth survey statement deals with the necessity of having written procedures for communicating with parents and students, including those who are limited-English proficient. Approximately 17% of respondents strongly agreed with having those procedures in place. Another 54% agreed or agreed more than disagreed with the survey statement. Approximately 13% of school administrators disagreed more than agreed with
the survey statement, and 13.8% of those surveyed indicated they disagreed with having written plans in place for communicating with parents and students including limited-English proficient families. Those administrators indicating strong disagreement with the statement totaled 2.3%. Overall results for statement nine are displayed in Figure 9. The demographic data consisting of school location type indicated that one-third of suburban schools agreed with the survey statement, yet when all negative responses were combined, 35.5% of school administrators were unable to agree with statement nine. Conversely, all school administrators from rural schools indicated they agreed to some level as having written communication plans in place. Approximately 45% of respondents agreed with the statement, 36.4% agreed more than disagreed, and 18.2% strongly agreed. Approximately 19% of administrators from urban schools indicated they agreed more than disagreed with statement number nine. Over 38% agreed with the statement and 11.5% from rural schools strongly agreed. Those from rural schools indicating disagreement with having written policies for communication, including those addressing limited-English proficient, totaled 30.7%. Approximately 19% disagreed more than agreed and approximately 12% disagreed with the survey statement. One-third of Catholic school respondents indicated they disagreed more than agreed with the statement, while almost 41% of private school administrators could not agree with having the stated communication plan in place. Approximately 22% of public school administrators were unable to agree to some level with statement number nine.
Figure 10. Overall Results Statement 10- Our school crisis plan includes procedures for recovering from a crisis incident, including continuing student education during an extended school closure.

The Rhode Island Terrorism Preparedness survey statement number 10 addresses the need to have plans in place to recover from a major crisis, including the ability to provide education services in the event of an extended school interruption. Survey statement number 10 states, “Our school crisis plan includes procedures for recovering from a crisis incident, including continuing student education during an extended school closure.” The overall responses indicate that the largest portion of respondents fell into the “disagree” category. Approximately 24% of school administrators surveyed
disagreed with the statement. Another 19.5% disagreed more than agreed, and 6.9% strongly disagreed. Over 50% of the total respondents were not able to agree with having an extended education plan in place to assist in the recovery of a school crisis incident.

The administrator agreement with statement number 10 included 5.7% who strongly agreed, 23% who agreed and 20.7% who agreed more than disagreed. The overall results for statement 10 are displayed in Figure 10. Demographic filters for school type showed that 22.9% of suburban school administrators disagreed more than agreed and another approximately 27% of administrators disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. The largest rural school category was the 45.5% of administrators who indicated they “agreed” with the statement. Another 9.1% agreed more than disagreed, but over 45% of respondents still were not able to agree to having plans in place to provide continuing education in the event of an extended school closure. No urban school administrator responding to the survey indicated strong agreement with statement number ten. The largest category of responses was in the “disagree” category with 38.5%. Another 11.5% of urban school administrators indicated they disagreed more than agreed and 3.8% strongly disagreed with regard to being prepared for an extended school closure in the event of an extended school closure. Of the five largest schools responding to the survey, three agreed with the statement, one agreed more than disagreed, and one disagreed with statement number 10. Over 60% of schools with a population of 250 or less were unable to agree with the statement. The school type filter also showed that showed that 25% of Catholic school administrators agreed with being prepared and another 16.7% agreed more than disagreed. One-third of Catholic school respondents indicated they disagreed more than agreed and another 25% disagreed with being prepared for an extended school
closure in the event a crisis situation required that situation. Private school responses indicated that the largest percentage of administrators disagreed with the survey statement. Another 18.5% disagreed more than agreed and 11.3% of privates school administrators strongly disagreed. Only 7.4% strongly agreed they were prepared for an extended school closure. Approximately 33% of respondents agreed or agreed more than disagreed with statement number 10. The largest portion of public school administrators agreed that their schools were properly prepared in the event of an extended school closure. Another 6.5% strongly agreed and 21.7% agreed more than disagreed. The total percentage of public school administrators indicating an overall disagreement was approximately 43%; 15.2% disagreed more than agreed, 21.7% disagreed, and 6.5% strongly disagreed.
Figure 11. Overall Results Statement 11- Our school receives adequate support and funding to be prepared for an emergency crisis situation

The Rhode Island School Terrorist Attack Preparedness Survey statement number 11 addresses the support and funding that schools receive to be prepared for emergency crisis situations. It states, “Our school receives adequate support and funding to be prepared for an emergency crisis situation.” The results of the survey indicate that the largest percentage of school administrators disagreed more than agreed with the statement. Almost 28% of administrators fell into that category, while another 17.2% disagreed and 18.4% strongly disagreed. Of those administrators indicating some sort of agreement with the statement, only 2.3% strongly agreed. Another 8% agreed and 26.4% agreed more than disagreed. The overall results for statement 11 are displayed in Figure
11. One of the five largest school districts in the survey (those with over 1000 students) indicated strong agreement with statement number 11. Four of the five administrators indicated agreement more than disagreement with having received adequate funding and support to be prepared for an emergency crisis situation. Administrators from the smallest schools in the survey, those with less than 250 students, indicated a lower degree of agreement with statement eleven. Approximately 24% of administrators strongly disagreed with the statement, while 17.6% disagreed and 20.6% disagreed more than agreed. Therefore, larger schools in Rhode Island indicated more favorable agreement with receiving adequate support and funding necessary to be prepared for emergency crisis situations.

Research statement number 12 addresses the practicing of drills in conjunction with community partners. It states, “Our school practices the emergency management plan with first responders and community partners on a regular basis.” Overall results of this survey statement indicate that the largest response group was those indicating disagreement. Over 32% of school administrators disagreed with the statement, over 10% strongly disagreed, and over 17% disagreed more than agreed. Almost 60% of the
Figure 12. Overall Results Statement 12- Our school practices the emergency management plan with first responders and community partners on a regular basis. Total respondents indicated some level of disagreement with the statement. Only 13.8% of school administrators strongly agreed with the statement. Approximately 18% and 8% respectively agreed or agreed more than disagreed with the statement. Overall results for statement 12 are displayed in Figure 12. Of the 48 suburban school responders, 31.3% indicated disagreement with the statement, while 10.4% disagreed and 12.5% disagreed more than agreed. Ten school administrators, making up approximately 21%, strongly agreed with the statement. Another 21% agreed with statement number 12 while two administrators, or 4.2% agreed more than disagreed with the statement. Rural school
administrators overwhelmingly indicated disagreement with practicing the emergency plan with first responders on a regular basis. Over 9% of respondents indicated strong disagreement, 27.3% indicated disagreement, and 45.5% indicated disagreement more than agreement. A total of almost 82% of rural school administrators indicated some level of disagreement with statement number 12. There were no Rhode Island rural school administrators indicating strong agreement or agreement with the statement. Approximately 18% of rural school administrators indicated that they agreed more than disagreed with the Rhode Island School Terrorist Attack Preparedness Survey statement 12. There were 26 Rhode Island school administrators who indicated their school location to be urban. The largest category of urban school administrators indicated disagreement with practicing the emergency management plan with first responders on a regular basis. Approximately 35% disagreed with the statement, 15.4% disagreed more than agreed, and 11.5% strongly disagreed with statement number 12. A total of 38.4% of urban school administrators indicated some level of agreement with statement 12. Of those, 7.7% strongly agreed, 19.2% agreed, and 11.5% agreed more than disagreed with the statement. There were 46 public school administrators who responded to survey statement number 12. The largest category of public school respondents were those indicating disagreement with the statement regarding regular practice of the emergency plan with local first responders. Over 30% indicated disagreement, another 15.2% disagreed more than agreed, and one public school administrator, or 2.2% strongly disagreed. Approximately 22% of Rhode Island public school administrators indicated strong agreement with statement 12. Nine school administrators, or 19.6%, indicated agreement, and another 10.9% agreed more than disagreed. When the private school
response filter is applied, the survey indicates 33.3% to be in disagreement with the statement regarding practicing with first responders. Approximately 26% of Rhode Island private school administrators indicated they disagreed more than agreed with the statement, and 22.2% strongly disagreed. Of those agreeing with survey statement number 12, 3.7% strongly agreed, 11.1% agreed, and 3.7% disagreed more than agreed. There were 12 Catholic school administrators responding to statement number 12. Approximately 42%, the largest portion of Catholic school administrators, indicated disagreement with the statement. Approximately 17% strongly disagreed with the statement and 8.3% disagreed more than agreed. There were four Catholic school administrators responding to the survey that indicated some level of agreement regarding regularly practicing the emergency plan with local first responders. One administrator strongly agreed, two agreed, and one more agreed more than disagreed with statement 12.
Figure 13. Overall Results Statement 13- Our school emergency plan has specific provisions to address special needs students

The Rhode Island School Terrorist Attack Preparedness survey statement 13 addresses the suggestion that all school crisis plans include a means by which special needs students are taken care of. It states, “Our school emergency plan has specific provisions to address special needs students.” Overall results for statement 13 showed that approximately 72% of administrator respondents answered with some level of agreement. Approximately 23% strongly agreed, 27% agreed, and 22% agreed more than disagreed. Conversely, 28% of respondents generally disagreed with the statement. Approximately 13% disagreed more than agreed, 14% disagreed, and 1% strongly disagreed with having provisions in place to address special needs students in case of an
emergency. Overall results for statement 13 are displayed in Figure 13. Demographic result filters revealed that twelve of the forty-eight suburban school respondents strongly agreed with statement thirteen. Additionally, approximately 21% of suburban school respondents agreed, and 25% agreed more than disagreed. Approximately 29% of suburban school administrators disagreed with the statement at some level. Specifically, 12.5% disagreed more than agreed, 14.6% disagreed, and 2.1% strongly disagreed. Rural schools had a higher level of agreement than that of suburban schools. Approximately 82% of rural school administrators agreed at some level with having plans in place to address special needs students in the event of an emergency. Conversely, approximately 18% of rural school administrators indicated they disagreed more than agreed with statement thirteen. Results from urban school administrators showed 68% generally agreed with statement thirteen and 32% generally disagreed with having plans in place to assist special needs students in the event of an emergency. When results are categorized by school type, it showed that 16.7% of Catholic school administrators agreed with statement thirteen and 41.7% agreed more than disagreed. Conversely, 25% of Catholic school administrators disagreed more than agreed and 16.7% disagreed with having plans in place to assist special needs students. The largest percentage of private school administrators (25.9%) disagreed with statement thirteen. An additional 18.5% disagreed more than agreed and 3.7% strongly disagreed. A total of 51.8% of Rhode Island private school administrators in the study agreed at some level with having plans in place to assist special needs students in the event of an emergency. More specifically, 7.4% strongly agreed and 22.2% both agreed and agreed more than disagreed. There were forty-five public school administrators who responded to the Rhode Island School
Terrorist Preparedness Survey. Of those administrators, approximately 38% strongly agreed with having plans in place to help special needs students in times of emergency. Another 31.1% agreed with the statement and 17.8% agreed more than disagreed. Conversely, 6.7% of public school administrators disagreed more than agreed and an equal percentage disagreed with the statement.

The Rhode Island School Terrorist Preparedness Survey statement number 14 addresses whether or not the school has specifically conducted a safety analysis. It states, “Our school has conducted an analysis to determine safety strengths and weaknesses.”

Overall statement results showed that approximately 66% of school administrator respondents agreed at some level with statement 14. Specifically, 14.8% strongly agreed that they had conducted an analysis to determine safety strengths and weaknesses. Another 31.8% of school administrators agreed with the statement and 19.3% agreed more than disagreed with statement 14. Approximately 34% of administrators disagreed with statement 14 to some degree. Specifically, 11.4% disagreed more than agreed,
Figure 14. Overall Results Statement 14- Our school has conducted an analysis to determine safety strengths and weaknesses

19.3% disagreed, and 3.4% strongly disagreed with having conducted a safety analysis at the school. Figure 14 displays the overall results of Rhode Island School Preparedness Survey Statement 14. When the school type demographic filter is applied, it can be seen that the largest group of suburban school administrators (39.6%) agreed with statement 14. Approximately 18.8% agreed more than disagreed and 16.7% of suburban school administrators strongly agreed with having conducted a school safety analysis to determine strengths and weaknesses. Approximately 25% of suburban school administrators disagreed overall with the statement. Specifically, 6.3% disagreed more than agreed, 14.6% disagreed, and 4.2% strongly disagreed. Slightly more than 45% of
rural school administrators indicated overall that they agreed with having conducted a school safety assessment. Specifically, 27.3% agreed and 18.2% agreed more than disagreed. No rural school administrators participating in the survey indicated strong agreement with statement number 14. The majority of respondents (54.6%) generally disagreed with the statement indicating a school safety assessment had been conducted. Approximately 27% of rural school administrators disagreed more than agreed, 18.2% disagreed, and 9.1% strongly disagreed with statement number 14. The largest percentage of urban school administrators (25.9%) indicated they disagreed with having conducted a safety analysis to determine strengths and weaknesses. Another 14.8% of rural school administrators indicated that they disagreed more than agreed with statement 14. Approximately 15% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement, 22.2% agreed, and 22.2% agreed more than disagreed. Of Catholic school administrators responding to the Rhode Island School Terrorist Preparedness Survey, 16.7% strongly agreed with statement 14. Approximately 33% agreed with the statement and 25% agreed more than disagreed with having conducted a school safety analysis. The survey results also showed that 25% of Catholic school administrators indicated they disagreed with statement 14. None of the Catholic school administrators responding to the survey strongly disagreed with having conducted a school safety assessment. The largest percentage of private independent school administrators (29.6%) agreed with statement 14. Another 7.4% of private school administrators strongly agreed with the statement and 18.5% agreed more than disagreed. A total of 55.5% of private school leaders generally agreed with the statement whereas 44.4% generally disagreed. Specifically,
22.2% disagreed more than agreed, and 22.2% disagreed with having conducted a school safety assessment. Of the public school administrators participating in the survey, the largest percentage (31.9%) agreed with the statement. Another 19.1% agreed more than disagreed and 17% strongly agreed with statement 14. Approximately 8.5% of public school administrator respondents disagreed more than agreed, 17% disagreed, and 6.4% strongly disagreed with having conducted a safety assessment at the school.

Survey statement number 15 addresses the suggestion that schools conduct training for faculty and staff regarding safety procedures. The survey statement number 15 is, “Our school conducts specific training for faculty and staff members on safety and emergency procedures.” Overall results for this statement reveal the largest percentage of school administrators (43.7%) were in the agree category. Additionally, 21.8% strongly agreed with the statement and another 21.8% agreed more than disagreed. Approximately 87% of administrators overall agreed at some level with having specific safety training in place for faculty and staff. Approximately 9% of administrators disagreed more than agreed with the statement and another 3.4% disagreed with statement 15. Results for statement 15 are displayed in Figure 15. Demographic filters reveal that 44.7% of suburban school administrators agreed with statement 15. Another 27.7% strongly agreed and 12.8% agreed more than disagreed with survey statement 15.
Overall, approximately 86% of suburban school administrators agreed with having specific training for faculty and staff with regard to safety and emergency procedures. Slightly more than 2% of suburban school administrators disagreed with statement 15 and another 12.8% disagreed more than agreed. No suburban school administrators strongly disagreed with statement 15. The largest percentage of rural school administrators (45.5%) indicated they agreed with statement 15. Additionally, 9.1% of rural administrators strongly agreed with conducting specific safety training for faculty and staff. Approximately 36% of rural administrators agreed more than disagreed with statement 15. Only 9.1% of rural school administrators disagreed more than agreed with
the statement. No administrators from schools identified as rural schools indicated they disagreed or strongly disagreed with statement 15. Of the 30 school administrators identifying their school as an urban school, 44.4% agreed with statement 15. Approximately 30% of urban school administrators agreed more than disagreed and approximately 15% strongly agreed with the statement indicating safety and emergency procedure training was conducted for faculty and staff. A total of approximately 11% of urban school administrators indicated general disagreement with statement 15. Specifically, 3.7% disagreed more than agreed and 7.4% disagreed. No urban school administrators strongly disagreed with statement 15. When school type demographic filters are applied to the survey results, it can be seen that all Catholic school administrators indicated overall general agreement with statement 15. Approximately 67% agreed with the statement, 16.7% agreed more than disagreed, and an equal number (16.7%) strongly agreed. There were 33 schools in the Rhode Island School Terrorism Preparedness Survey that were categorized as private. Approximately 42% of private school administrators indicated that they agreed with conducting specific training for faculty and staff regarding safety and emergency procedures. Additionally, 11.5% strongly agreed with statement 15 and 26.9% agreed more than disagreed with the statement. No private school administrators strongly disagreed with statement 15, while 7.7% disagreed and 11.5% disagreed more than agreed. With regard to public school administrators, the largest percentage (38.3%) agreed with having conducted safety and
**Figure 16.** Overall Results Statement 16- Faculty and staff at our school have ready access to our school crisis plan

emergency training for faculty and staff. Additionally, 27.7% strongly agreed with the statement and 21.3% agreed more than disagreed. Of those not agreeing with the statement, 10.6% disagreed more than agreed and 2.1% disagreed. There were no public school administrators indicating strong disagreement with statement 15.

The Rhode Island School Terrorism Preparedness Survey statement number 16 address faculty and staff having access to the school crisis plan. It specifically states, “Faculty and staff at our school have ready access to our school crisis plan.” The largest group of Rhode Island school administrators (40.2%) responded in the “agree” category. An additional 37.9% strongly agreed with the statement and 14.9% agreed more than
disagreed with the statement indicating faculty and staff had ready access to the school crisis plan. Of those school administrators responding negatively to the statement, 5.7% disagreed more than agreed and 1.1% disagreed. The overall results for survey statement 16 are displayed in Figure 16. The application of demographic filters show 47.9% of suburban school administrators agreed with statement 16, while 39.6% strongly agreed, and 8.3% agreed more than disagreed. There were 4.2% of suburban school administrators that indicated they disagreed more than agreed with faculty and staff having ready access to the school crisis plan. The largest category of rural school administrators (36.4%) indicated agreement with statement 16. Additionally, 27.3% of rural school administrators strongly agreed with the statement and 18.2% agreed more than disagreed. Another 18.2% of rural school administrators disagreed more than agreed with statement 16. No rural school administrators disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement indicating there was ready access to the school crisis plan. The largest category (38.5%) of Rhode Island administrators identifying their schools as being in an urban setting indicated strong agreement with statement 16. Additionally, 30.8% of urban school administrators agreed with statement 16 and 23.1% agreed more than disagreed with faculty and staff having ready access to the school crisis plan. No rural school administrators strongly disagreed with statement 16, while 3.8% disagreed more than agreed and 3.8% disagreed. Urban school administrators indicating general agreement with statement 16 responded in the following manner: 38.5% strongly agreed, 30.8% agreed, and 23.1% agreed more than disagreed. No urban school administrators indicated strong disagreement with faculty and staff having access to the crisis plan. Additionally, 3.8% of urban school administrators disagreed more than agreed, and
another 3.8% disagreed with statement 16. Of those schools categorized as Catholic, 41.7% indicated strong agreement that faculty and staff have ready access to the school crisis plan. Additionally, 33.3% indicated agreement with the statement and another 25% indicated agreement more than disagreement. No Catholic school administrators indicated a negative response to statement 16. The largest number of school administrators from private independent schools (44.4%) indicated agreement with statement 16. Another 22.6% of private school administrators indicated strong agreement with faculty and staff having ready access to the school crisis plan. Additionally, 22.6% indicated agreement more than disagreement. Of those private school administrators indicating some level of disagreement, 7.4% disagreed more than agreed, and 3.7% disagreed with the statement. The largest percentage (45.7%) of public school administrators were those that strongly agreed with statement 16. Additionally, 39.1% agreed and 8.7% agreed more than disagreed with statement 16. There were no public school administrators that disagreed or strongly disagreed with statement 16. Only 6.5% of public school administrators disagreed more than agreed with faculty and staff having ready access to the school crisis plan.

Survey statement 17 addresses schools providing each classroom with emergency supplies to be used in the event of a crisis situation. The statement specifically reads, “Our school provides each classroom with an emergency crisis bag (containing items such as class roster, copy of emergency procedures, first aid supplies, flashlight, food/water) to be used in the event of an emergency.” Overall survey results for
Figure 17. Overall Results Statement 17- Our school provides each classroom with an emergency crisis bag (containing items such as class roster, copy of emergency procedures, first aid supplies, flashlight, food/water) to be used in the event of an emergency.

Statement 17 indicated the largest percentage of Rhode Island administrators (28.7%) disagreed with the statement. An additional 6.9% of administrators strongly disagreed and 11.5% disagreed more than agreed. Overall, 47.1% of Rhode Island administrators responding to the survey indicated some level of disagreement with having provided classrooms with an emergency crisis bag and supplies. Of those responding with some degree of agreement, 18.4% strongly agreed, 20.7% agreed, and 13.8% agreed more than disagreed with statement 17. Overall results for survey statement 17 are displayed in
Figure 17. School location demographic filters applied to statement 17 indicate 29.2% of suburban school administrators agree that they have provided classrooms with emergency supplies. Additionally, 20.8% of suburban school administrators strongly agreed and 8.3% agreed more than disagreed with survey statement 17. A total of 41.7% of suburban school administrators disagreed at some level that school classrooms were supplied with an emergency crisis bag and supplies. Specifically, 27.1% of suburban school administrators disagreed with the statement, 10.4% disagreed more than agreed, and 4.2% strongly disagreed. The largest percentage (27.3%) of rural school administrators indicated agreement with statement 17. An additional 18.2% strongly agreed and another 18.2% agreed more than disagreed. Likewise, 18.2% of rural school administrators disagreed with the statement and another 18.2% strongly disagreed. There was no rural school administrator who responded that he or she disagreed more than agreed with the statement indicating emergency items were supplied for each classroom. The largest percentage (34.6%) of urban school administrators disagreed with statement 17. An additional 19.2% of urban school administrators disagreed more than agreed and 7.7% strongly disagreed. Overall, 31.5% of urban school administrators disagreed with statement 17 at some level. Survey data by school type shows the largest percentage (33.3%) of Catholic school administrators disagreed more than agreed with survey statement 17 indicating classrooms were provided with emergency crisis bags and supplies. Additionally, 25% of Catholic school administrators disagreed with the statement. Of those responding favorably to some degree, 16.7% strongly agreed, 16.7% agreed, and 8.3% agreed more than disagreed with survey statement 17. The largest percentage of private school respondents (29.6%) disagreed with statement 17.
Additionally, 11.1% of private school administrator respondents disagreed more than agreed and 7.4% of respondents strongly disagreed with having provided classrooms with an emergency crisis bag. Of those private school administrators who responded with some degree of agreement, 22.2% strongly agreed, 14.8% agreed, and 14.8% agreed more than disagreed with statement 17. The largest percentage (30.4%) of public school administrators responding to survey statement 17 indicated disagreement. An additional 8.7% of respondents strongly disagreed and 6.5% disagreed more than agreed with whether or not they provided emergency supplies for the classroom. Of those public school administrators that responded to the Rhode Island School Terrorism Preparedness Survey, 23.9% agreed with statement 17. Additionally, 15.2% strongly agreed and 15.2% agreed more than disagreed with the statement indicating the school provided emergency crisis supplies for each classroom.

The Rhode Island School Terrorism Preparedness Survey statement 18 addresses the need for proper communication arrangements to be utilized in the event of an emergency. The statement specifically says, “Our school is prepared with two other means of communication to be used in a crisis situation other than the school telephone
Figure 18. Overall Results Statement 18- Our school is prepared with two other means of communication to be used in a crisis situation other than the school telephone system (such as cell phones, two way radios, bullhorns, etc).” Overall administrator responses revealed 39.8% strongly agreed, 33% agreed, and 10.2% agreed more than disagreed with statement 18, indicating alternate means of communication were available in the event of an emergency. Additionally, 10.2% of administrator respondents disagreed more than agreed with statement 18. Another 5.7% disagreed and 1.1% strongly disagreed with having two other means of communication in place to be used in a crisis situation. Overall results for survey statement 18 are displayed in Figure 18. Demographic categorization by school location showed that the greatest percentage of
suburban school administrators (47.9%) strongly agreed with statement 18. The largest percentage of rural school administrators (54.5%) were in the “agree” category concerning having two alternate means of communication in the event of an emergency. The largest group of school administrators (29.6%) identifying their schools as being in an urban setting strongly agreed with survey statement 18. When results were categorized by school type, 50% of Catholic school administrators chose the “agree” category. An additional 16.7% strongly agreed and 8.3% agreed more than disagreed with statement 18. There were also 16.7% of Catholic school administrators that disagreed more than agreed with the statement and another 8.3% that were in the “disagree” category. No Catholic school administrators strongly disagreed with survey statement 18. The largest group of private school administrators (37%) strongly agreed with statement 18 that they had two other means of communication for their school in the event of a crisis situation. An additional 25.9% of private school administrators agreed with the survey statement and 11.1% disagreed more than agreed. There were also
Figure 19. Overall Results Statement 19- As a school administrator, I have received specific professional training relative to school safety and terrorism.

18.5% of private school administrators that disagreed more than agreed and 7.4% disagreed. No private school administrators chose the “strongly disagree” category for the Rhode Island School Terrorism Preparedness Survey statement 18. The largest group of public school administrators (46.8%) chose the “strongly agree” category concerning having two alternate means of communication. Additionally, 31.9% of public school administrators agreed with the statement and 10.6% agreed more than disagreed. Another 4.3% of public school administrators disagreed more than agreed, 4.3% disagreed, and 2.1% strongly disagreed with statement 18 regarding having two alternate means of communication available for use in the event of a crisis situation.
The Rhode Island School Terrorist Attack Preparedness Survey statement 19 addresses school administrator training with regard to school safety and terrorism. It specifically states, “As a school administrator, I have received specific professional training relative to school safety and terrorism.” Overall results for statement 19 were quite divergent. Although 21.8% of school administrators strongly agreed with the statement, an equal number also responded by selecting the “Disagree” category. Additionally, 18.4% of school administrators agreed with the statement and 18.4% agreed more than disagreed. The smallest response category was the 9.2% of respondents indicating they disagreed more than agreed. There were 10.3% of school administrators that strongly disagreed with having received specific professional training relative to school safety and terrorism. Overall results for statement 19 of the Rhode Island School Terrorist Preparedness Survey are displayed in Figure 19. When demographic filters were applied, results indicated 27.7% of suburban school administrators strongly agreed with the statement. An additional 17% agreed and 19.1% agreed more than disagreed with the statement indicating the administrator had received specific safety and terrorism training. Seventeen percent of suburban school administrators disagreed more than agreed with statement 19, 10.6% disagreed, and 8.5% disagreed more than agreed. Rural school administrator responses indicated the largest response group (27.3%) to be in the “Disagree” category. An additional 18.2% of rural school administrators disagreed more than agreed and 9.1% strongly disagreed. There were 18.2% of rural administrators that strongly agreed with the statement, another 18.2% who agreed, and 9.1% that agreed more than disagreed with having been provided with training relative to school safety and terrorism. The largest category of urban school administrators (29.6%) responded in the
“disagree” category. An additional 11.1% strongly disagreed and another 3.7% disagreed more than agreed that they had received professional safety and terrorism training. Of those urban school administrators responding to the survey with an overall response of agreement, 22.2% agreed more than disagreed, 18.5% agreed, and 14.8% strongly agreed with statement 19. School type filtering revealed that 41.7% of Catholic school administrators responding to the survey agreed more than disagreed with statement 19. An additional 25% of Catholic school administrators strongly agreed and 8.3% agreed with having received training in school safety and terrorism. A total of 25% of Catholic school administrators disagreed overall with statement 19. Specifically, 16.7% disagreed and 8.3% disagreed more than agreed. There were no Catholic school administrators indicating strong disagreement with statement 19 regarding receiving specific training in school safety and terrorism preparedness. The largest group of private school administrators (33.3%) indicated disagreement with having received specific school safety and terrorism training. Additionally, 18.5% of private school administrators strongly disagreed and 14.8% disagreed more than agreed with statement 19. Overall, 66.6% of private school administrators generally disagreed with having been provided professional training regarding school safety and terrorism. There were 18.5% of private school administrators that agreed more than agreed, 7.4% that agreed, and another 7.4% that strongly agreed with statement 19. Results from public school administrators showed that 30.4% of respondents strongly agreed with having received professional training in school safety and terrorism. Additionally, 26.1% agreed with the statement
Figure 20. Overall Results Statement 20- Our school has adequate security (including access control, perimeter security, etc)

and 13% agreed more than disagreed. Of those public school administrators indicating some level of overall disagreement with statement 19, 17.4% disagreed, 8.7% strongly disagreed, and 4.3% disagreed more than agreed.

The Rhode Island School Terrorist Attack Preparedness Survey statement 20 addresses the administrator perceptions with regard to general school security. It specifically states, “Our school has adequate security (including access control, perimeter security, etc).” Overall results of the survey indicated the largest response category to be those that agreed with the statement (30.7%). An additional 22.7% of school administrators agreed more than disagreed and 17% strongly agreed that their particular
school had adequate security. Conversely, 12.5% of administrator respondents disagreed more than agreed, 11.4% disagreed, and 5.7% strongly disagreed that their school had adequate security. Overall, 29.6% of Rhode Island school administrators responding to the survey indicated some level of disagreement that their school had adequate security. Overall results for statement 20 are displayed in Figure 20. Demographic filter application revealed the largest category of urban school administrator respondents (33.3%) agreed more than disagreed with statement 20. Additionally, 18.5% strongly disagreed and 14.8% agreed with the statement indicating there was adequate school security. Conversely, 14.8% of urban school administrators disagreed more than agreed with statement 20, 11.1% disagreed, and 7.4% of respondents strongly disagreed. Overall, 33.3% of urban administrators disagreed with the statement indicating their particular school had adequate security. The largest percentage of Rhode Island rural school administrators (36.4%) chose the “agree” category for statement 20. Additionally, 27.3% agreed more than disagreed and 9.1% strongly agreed that their particular school had adequate security. Conversely, 18.2% disagreed more than agreed and 9.1% disagreed with the statement. No rural school administrators strongly disagreed with statement 20. The largest number of suburban school administrators (39.6%) chose the “agree” category for statement 20. Additionally, 18.8% strongly agreed and 14.6% agreed more than disagreed. There were also 10.4% of suburban school administrators that disagreed more than agreed, 10.4% that disagreed, and 6.3% strongly disagreed with the statement indicating their particular school had adequate security. A substantial portion of Catholic school administrators (83.3%) generally agreed with statement 20. Specifically, 16.7% strongly agreed, 33.3% agreed, and 33.3% agreed more than
disagreed. There were 16.7% of Catholic school administrators that chose the “disagree more than agree” category. No Catholic school administrators chose the “disagree” category or “strongly disagree” category. The largest portion of private school administrators (33.3%) chose the “agree” category, indicating agreement with the school having adequate security. Additionally, 22.2% agreed more than disagreed and 18.5% strongly agreed. Conversely, 14.8% of Rhode Island private school administrators responding to the survey disagreed more than agreed, 7.4% disagreed, and 3.7% strongly disagreed that their particular school had adequate security. The largest percentage of public school administrators (29.8%) indicated agreement with their particular school having adequate security. Additionally, 17% strongly agreed and another 17% agreed more than disagreed. Overall, 63.8% of public school administrators responding to the survey indicated some level of general agreement with statement 20. Conversely, 17% of public school administrators chose the “disagree” category, 10.6% disagreed more than agreed, and 8.5% strongly disagreed that their schools had adequate security.

Survey statement 21 addresses whether or not schools conduct simulations to prepare for actual crisis situations. It specifically states, “Our school conducts simulations of actual crisis situations as part of crisis preparedness.” The Rhode Island School Terrorism Preparedness Survey overall results for statement 21 showed 27.9% of administrators responded by choosing the “agree” category. Additionally, 15.1% agreed more than disagreed and 12.8% strongly agreed. Conversely, 20.9% of administrators disagreed, 18.6% disagreed more than agreed, and 4.7% strongly disagreed with the
Figure 21. Overall Results Statement 21- Our school conducts simulations of actual crisis situations as part of crisis preparedness statement indicating simulations were conducted as part of crisis preparedness. Overall results for statement 21 are displayed in Figure 21. Demographic filter application showed that 25.5% of suburban school administrators agreed with statement 21. Additionally, 19.1% strongly agreed and 12.8% agreed more than disagreed that they conducted simulations of actual crisis situations as part of crisis preparedness. Of those administrators indicating some level of disagreement with statement 21, 21.3% chose the “disagree” category, 14.9% disagreed more than agreed, and 6.4% strongly disagreed. The largest category of rural school administrators (45.5%) indicated disagreement more than agreement. Additionally, 27.3% of rural school administrators disagreed with the
statement indicating they conducted simulations as part of crisis preparedness. There were no rural school administrators that indicated strong disagreement with the statement. Of those administrators rural administrators indicating some level of agreement with statement 21, 18.2% chose the “agree” category and 9.1% chose the “agree more than disagree” category. No rural school administrators chose the “strongly agree” category. Of those administrators identifying their schools as “urban,” 38.5% chose the “agree” category, 19.2% chose the “agree more than disagree” category, and 7.7% chose the “strongly agree” category. Additionally, 15.4% of urban school administrators indicated they disagreed more than agreed, 15.4% disagreed, and 3.8% strongly disagreed with the statement indicating simulations were conducted as part of crisis preparation. The largest category of Catholic school administrators (41.7%) chose the “agree” category in reference to conducting simulations. Additionally, 8.3% agreed more than disagreed and an equal 8.3% strongly agreed. Conversely, 25% of Catholic school administrators chose the “disagree” category and 16.7% disagreed more than agreed. No Catholic school administrators strongly disagreed with statement 21. The results of the Rhode Island School Terrorism Preparedness Survey for statement 21 with private schools indicated 26.9% of administrators agreed with the statement, 15.4% agreed more than disagreed, and 7.7% strongly agreed. Additionally, 26.9% disagreed more than agreed, 19.2% disagreed, and 3.8% strongly disagreed with the statement indicating simulations of actual crisis situations were conducted. The public school demographic filter for statement 21 indicated 26.1% of administrators chose the “agree” category. Additionally, 17.4% strongly agreed and 15.2% agreed more than disagreed. Conversely, 19.6%
Figure 22. Overall Results Statement 22- Our school verifies the identity of service personnel and vendors visiting the school and keeps detailed records of names, organizations, vehicle information, and other identification information disagreed, 15.2% disagreed more than agreed, and 6.5% of public school administrators strongly disagreed with statement 21.

Statement 22 of the Rhode Island School Terrorist Preparedness Survey attempts to gather information relative to the identity and recording of school visitors who are vendors or service personnel. It states, “Our school verifies the identity of service personnel and vendors visiting the school and keeps detailed records of names, organizations, vehicle information, and other identification information.” Overall results from school administrators showed 21.6% strongly agreed, 22.7% agreed, and 22.7%
agreed more than disagreed with the statement. Additionally, 21.6% disagreed more than
agreed, 8% disagreed, and 3.4% of respondents strongly disagreed with the statement.
Survey statement results for statement 22 are displayed in Figure 22. Demographic filter
applications revealed that the largest group of suburban school administrators (29.2%)
indicated strong agreement with statement 22. Additionally, 18.8% of suburban
administrators agreed with the statement and 20.8% agreed more than disagreed. There
were 22.9% of administrators that disagreed more than agreed and 6.3% that disagreed
with statement 22. An additional 2.1% of suburban school administrators strongly
disagreed with the statement indicating the verification of service personnel and vendors
visiting the school and the keeping of detailed records of names, organizations, and
vehicle information of visitors. The largest group of rural school administrators (36.4%)
chose the “disagree more than agree” category. Additionally, 18.2% disagreed and
another 18.2% of rural school administrators strongly disagreed with statement 22.
Overall, 72.8% of rural school administrators disagreed at some level with statement 22
regarding identification and record keeping of service personnel and vendor information.
There were 18.2% of rural administrators that indicated strong agreement with statement
22 and another 9.1% indicated agreement more than disagreement. No rural
administrators chose the “agree” category for the survey statement 22. The largest group
of urban school administrators (37%) chose the “agree” category. Additionally, 29.6% of
urban administrators agreed more than disagreed with statement 22 and 11.1% strongly
agreed. There were also 14.8% of urban administrators that disagreed more than agreed
with the statement and 7.4% disagreed. There were no urban administrators that strongly
disagreed with the statement regarding the safety procedures as related to vendors and
service personnel. School type filtering showed that 41.7% of Catholic school
administrators, the largest response group, disagreed more than agreed with statement 22. There were also 25% of Catholic school administrators that indicated agreement, 16.7% strongly agreed, and 16.7% agreed more than disagreed. Private school administrator results revealed that 22.2% agreed more than disagreed, 18.5% strongly agreed, and 14.8% chose the “agree” category. Additionally, 22.2% of private school administrators disagreed more than agreed, 14.8% disagreed, and 7.4% strongly disagreed with the statement indicating service and vendor personnel were identified and records were kept regarding their names, organizations, and vehicle information. An equal portion of public school administrators (25.5%) chose the “strongly agree” category, “agree” category, and “agree more than disagree” category. Additionally, 14.9% disagreed more than agreed, 6.4% disagreed, and 2.1% strongly disagreed with statement 22.

Statement 23 of the Rhode Island School Terrorist Preparedness Survey addresses the coordination between the school and the local law enforcement agency. It specifically states, “The appropriate law enforcement agency servicing our school has a copy of our school blueprints, floor plans, and diagrams.” Overall results indicated that 43.7% of administrator respondents chose the “strongly agree” category. Additionally, 29.9% chose the agree category, and 6.9% chose the agree more than disagree category. Of those administrators indicating some level of disagreement, 10.3% disagreed and 9.2% disagreed more than agreed. No administrators strongly disagreed with the
Figure 23. Overall Results Statement 23- The appropriate law enforcement agency servicing our school has a copy of our school blueprints, floor plans, and diagrams statement that local law enforcement had a copy of the school plans and blueprints. Overall results for survey statement 23 are displayed in Figure 23. When school location filters were applied, the survey results indicated that 57.4% of suburban school administrators strongly agreed with statement 23. Additionally, 25.5% agreed, and 4.3% agreed more than disagreed. Conversely, 8.5% of suburban school administrators disagreed more than agreed and 4.3% disagreed with the statement regarding law enforcement having a copy of school blueprints, floor plans, and diagrams. The largest group (36.4%) of rural school administrators chose the “strongly agree” category for statement 23. Additionally, 18.2% agreed and an equal 18.2% agreed more than
disagreed with the statement. Of those rural school administrators indicating general
disagreement, 18.2% chose the “disagree” category and 9.1% chose the “disagree more
than agree” category. The survey results for urban school administrators showed that the
largest group (37%) chose the “agree” category. Additionally, 25.9% strongly agreed
and 7.4% agreed more than disagreed with statement 23. There were also 18.5% of rural
administrators that chose the “disagree” category and 11.1% chose the “disagree more
than agree category.” When the school type filter was applied to statement 23 regarding
law enforcement having school plans in their possession, results indicated that 36.4% of
Catholic school administrators strongly agreed. Additionally, 27.3% agreed, and 18.2%
agreed more than disagreed with statement 23. An equal 9.1% of Catholic school
administrators chose the “disagree more than agree” and “disagree” category when
completing the survey. Private school administrators responded to statement 23 by
choosing the “strongly agree” category 25.9% of the time. Additionally, 22.2% chose the
“agree” category and 7.4% chose the “agree more than disagree” category. There were
also an equal 22.2% of private school administrators that chose the “disagree more than
agree” category and the “disagree” category. No private school administrators chose the
“strongly disagree” category regarding the fact that law enforcement had copies of the
school plans in case of an emergency crisis situation. The survey results from public
school administrators for statement 23 indicated the majority (57.4%) of administrators
strongly agreed that local law enforcement had copies of the school blueprints, floor
plans, and diagrams. There were an additional 34% of public school administrators that
Figure 24. Overall Results Statement 24- I believe a large scale terror attack on our school is a possibility we must prepare for

chose the “agree” category and 2.1% chose the “agree more than disagree” survey category. Only 4.3% disagreed and 2.1% disagreed more than agreed with statement 23.

Statement 24 of the Rhode Island School Terrorist Attack Preparedness Survey addresses the overall opinion of school administrators with regard to the need to prepare for the potential for a school terrorist attack. It specifically states, “I believe a large scale terror attack on our school is a possibility we must prepare for.” Overall administrator opinions revealed that the largest group (29.5%) of Rhode Island administrators chose the “agree” category. Additionally, 25% chose the “agree more than disagree” category and 10.2% chose the “strongly agree” category. Overall, 64.7% of Rhode Island
administrators agreed at some level with statement 24, that a school terrorist attack was something necessary to prepare for. On the contrary, 17% disagreed more than agreed with the statement, 9.1% disagreed, and 9.1% strongly disagreed with the statement. Overall results for statement 24 are displayed in Figure 24. Suburban school administrators responded to statement 24 by selecting the “agree” category 33.3% of the time. Additionally, 27.1% agreed more than disagreed and 10.4% strongly agreed with statement 24 regarding a school terrorist attack being something necessary to prepare for. An equal number of suburban administrators (10.4%) chose the “disagree more than agree” and “disagree” categories. An additional 8.3% of suburban administrators strongly disagreed with statement 24. The largest group of rural school administrator respondents (36.4%) chose the “disagree more than agree” category. Additionally, 27.3% strongly disagreed with statement 24 indicating a school terror attack was something necessary to prepare for. Of those rural school administrators indicating some degree of agreement, 27.3% agreed with the statement and 9.1% agreed more than disagreed. The urban school results for statement 24 showed that 25.9% of administrators agreed more than disagreed. Additionally, 22.2% agreed and 14.8% of urban school administrators strongly agreed with statement 24. Of those urban school administrators generally choosing disagreement, 22.2% disagreed more than agreed, 11.1% disagreed, and 3.7% strongly disagreed. When demographic filters were applied by school type, results showed that 33.3% of Catholic school administrators agreed with statement 24. An additional 25% agreed more than disagreed and 8.3% strongly agreed with the statement indicating a large scale school terror attack was something to prepare for. On the contrary, 33.3% of Catholic school administrator respondents disagreed more than agreed
with statement 24. The largest group of private school administrators (25.9%) chose the “agree more than disagree” category for statement 24. Additionally, 14.8% agreed and 3.7% strongly agreed with the statement. An equal number of private school respondents (22.2%) chose the “disagree more than agree” category and “agree” category. There were also 11.1% of private school administrators that strongly disagreed with statement 24. Public school administrators chose the “agree” category 34% of the time. Additionally, 25.5% agreed more than disagreed and 14.9% strongly agreed. Overall, 74.4% of public school administrators responding to the survey indicated some level of agreement with the need to prepare for a large scale school terror attack. Conversely, 10.6% of public school administrators strongly disagreed, 10.6% disagreed more than agreed, and 4.3% disagreed with statement 24.

Statement 25 addresses the overall opinions of Rhode Island School administrators with regard to school preparation for emergency situations including terrorist attacks. It specifically states, “I am confident our school is prepared for emergency crisis situations including acts of terror.” The overall results indicated that the largest group of administrators (37.5%) agreed more than disagreed with the statement. Additionally, 29.5% agreed and 8% of administrators strongly agreed with being prepared for emergency crisis situations including acts of terror. There were also 18.2% of school administrators that disagreed more than agreed and 6.8% disagreed with statement 25. Overall results for statement 25 are displayed in Figure 25. When demographic filtering was applied, results indicated that 39.6% of suburban school administrators chose the “agree” category. Additionally, 22.9% chose
Figure 25. Overall Results Statement 25- I am confident our school is prepared for emergency crisis situations including acts of terror

the “agree more than disagree” category and 14.6% chose the “strongly agree” category. Of those administrators responding in an overall negative manner to the statement, 20.8% indicated disagreement more than agreement and 2.1% indicated disagreement. Rural school administrators responded by selecting the “agree more than disagree” category 81.8% of the time. There were also 9.1% of rural administrators that chose the “agree” category and 9.1% chose the “agree more than disagree” category. There were 44.4% of urban school administrators that selected the “agree more than disagree” category and 22.2% chose the “agree” category. Additionally, 18.5% disagreed more than agreed and 14.8% disagreed with statement 25. When the school type filter was applied, results
indicated that 41.7% of Catholic school administrator respondents chose the “agree” category. Additionally, 25% chose the “agree more than disagree” category, 25% chose the “disagree more than agree” category, and 8.3% disagreed with statement 25 regarding overall preparation for emergency situations including acts of terror. The results for private school administrators revealed 44.4% agreed more than disagreed, 14.8% agreed, and 7.4% strongly agreed with statement 25. Additionally, 25.9% disagreed more than agreed and 7.4% disagreed with the statement regarding overall preparation for emergency situations and acts of terror. Public school administrator responses revealed that 36.2% agreed more than disagreed, 34% agreed, and 10.6% strongly agreed with statement 25. Additionally, 12.8% disagreed more than agreed and 6.4% of public school administrators disagreed with statement 25.
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The issue of school safety and security has several dimensions, including both the relationship between safety and learning, and the actual elements of creating safe and secure schools. The theoretical literature and approach forms the foundation for the research into actual safety and security practices in Rhode Island. Paine (2006) indicates that effective safety and security measures within a school, both protects the physical safety of students and promotes a more effective learning environment. Additionally, the theoretical school safety literature substantiates the fact that safe and orderly schools are more effective, and conversely, students are less successful at learning in an environment where they fear for their safety (Edmonds, 1982; Lezotte, 1991). The research conducted as part of the Rhode Island School Terrorist Attack Preparedness Survey focusses on the physical safety of Rhode Island schools, but also has a foundation based on the theoretical literature connecting school success with school safety.

The state of the world at this time has clearly shown itself to be one that is unpredictable. The events of 9/11 have dramatically changed the world in which we live and have demonstrated to Americans that we must now prepare for what was once unthinkable; a specific attack on our home soil. America is a much different place in recent years, with increased security in almost every area of life; from airports to sporting events to schools. According to Trump and Lavarello (2003) American schools are at risk for the possibility of a terrorist attack and it is therefore critical that schools take steps to increase security and protect U.S. students.
School security issues and school violence preparation discussions dramatically increased after the 1999 Columbine, Colorado incident where two teenagers shot and killed 12 students and a teacher before killing themselves. A string of school violence issues after Columbine stressed the need to increase attention on the issue of school safety. Some of those school issues included two 1999 school shootings in Georgia and New Mexico, a 2001 California school shooting and a 2002 shooting at Virginia’s Appalachian School of Law. In 2007, 33 people were killed on the campus of Virginia Tech. Since the Virginia Tech incidents there have been 41 separate shooting incidents on American schools or campuses. Schools continue to be places where violent acts are perpetrated and therefore it necessitates attention to the issue of school safety and preparation.

School attacks abroad, including the 2004 school terrorist attack in Beslan, Russia, demonstrate that school violence is not only an American phenomena. In that tragedy, Chechen terrorists connected with al Qaeda, killed 323 and wounded another 700 in the attack on the school. The Beslan attack is a clear demonstration of the incredibly damaging potential of a terrorist attack associated with a school. Many other school related acts of violence and terrorism have been committed around the world since the Beslan attack, most notably a 2009 school shooting in Winnenden, Germany, where 15 people were shot and killed at Albertville Technical High School. John Callery (n.d.) of the Center for Advanced Defense Studies indicated that American schools are legitimate terrorist attack targets. He stated that schools of particular risk include those where U.S. Congress’ children attend, as well as all schools in the Washington, D.C. area and schools in and around U.S. military bases. The United States must take steps to
assess the current state of school preparedness and then respond appropriately to prepare for acts of violence that may impact students. Renowned school safety experts Michael and Chris Dorn (2005) indicated that schools are serious terrorist targets because of a general lack of serious security measures and because of their incredible symbolic value as targets. An attack on an American school would cause a sense of fear and panic as well as the probability of significant loss of life.

After the events of Columbine and other internal terrorist events in the 1990’s, most state education departments began requiring schools to design and implement school crisis plans to deal with the potential for school violence. The initial school crisis plans generally focused on preparation for violent school attacks similar to that of the shooting incidents of Columbine High School. But, since the events of 9/11, it is generally recognized that the school crisis plan should also specifically address preparation for acts of terrorism with the intended result of damaging both property and harming children within the schools (Delisio, 2006).

The U.S. Department of Education published a statement in 2003 that strongly encouraged every school to have an emergency management plan. Section 16-21-23 of Rhode Island law requires schools within the state to provide protection for pupils attending those schools, including the creation of a school safety plan providing plans for emergency response and safety preparation (Rhode Island General Assembly, n.d.). The details of Rhode Island law section 16-21-23 can be found in Appendix A. Additionally, section 16-21-24 of the Rhode Island general statutes (Rhode Island General Assembly, n.d.) specifically focuses on the details of the requirements for school safety plans and school emergency response plans. The full details of Rhode Island 16-21-24 outlining
emergency crisis plan requirements can be found in Appendix B. Many of the requirements found in Rhode Island 16-21-24 are addressed as part of the researcher created terrorism preparedness survey utilized in the study since they are common elements in school safety literature. The survey was created based on terrorist preparedness guidelines and suggestions from the Department of Homeland Security (2007), U.S. Department of Education (2007), National School Safety Center (2005), National Association of School Resource Officers (2005), and the input of local Rhode Island education and public safety professionals through pilot testing of the survey.

**Research Questions**

RQ1. To what extent do Rhode Island schools have an adequate and comprehensive school crisis plan in place?

RQ2. To what extent have school crisis plans been developed and reviewed in conjunction with emergency professionals?

RQ3. To what extent are emergency crisis plans practiced and reviewed?

RQ4. To what extent do emergency crisis plans include:

a. guidelines that coincide with a change in the federal color coded terrorist warning system?

b. acts of terror?

c. procedures for communicating with parents and students, including those who are limited-English proficient?

d. procedures for recovering from an incident, including continuing student education during an extended school closure?

e. provisions to address special needs students?
RQ5. To what extent do schools receive adequate support and funding to be prepared for an emergency crisis situation?

RQ6. To what extent is safety and emergency preparedness training provided for faculty, staff and administrators?

RQ7. To what extent are schools prepared for an emergency crisis by providing:
   a. a classroom emergency crisis bag containing emergency supplies and information?
   b. several different means of communicating?
   c. adequate building and perimeter security?
   d. school blueprints and information to law enforcement?

RQ8. To what extent do administrators believe terrorist attacks are a possibility requiring preparation?

RQ9. To what extent do administrators believe schools are prepared for emergency crisis situations including acts of terror?

Summary and Discussion of the Findings

The results of the study showed the perceptions of Rhode Island school administrators indicated both strengths and weaknesses regarding crisis preparation and terrorism preparedness. Although many research question results indicated a fairly high degree of positively correlated responses, the question remains, to what degree of deviation from or disagreement with standard crisis and terrorism preparation practices should Rhode Island schools accept?
Research Question One

RQ1. To what extent do Rhode Island schools have an adequate and comprehensive school crisis plan in place?

Results

Research question one addressed the overall perceptions of school administrators with regard to the school crisis plan. It included survey statements one and two. Survey statement one addressed the perceptions of Rhode Island administrators with regard to each school having an adequate and comprehensive school crisis plan in place. The results of the survey indicated that 37.5% and 40.9% of responses fell into the “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” category respectively. Eighteen percent of responses fell into the “Agree More than Disagree” category. A smaller percentage of responses (4.6%) fell into a negative category as “Disagree More than Agree” or “Disagree”. The overall response rate can be seen in Figure 1. Survey results indicate a fairly high level of preparation with regard to having an adequate crisis plan in place, although 18% of responding administrators could only “agree more than disagree” and almost 5% of respondent disagree at some level with their particular school being in compliance with Rhode Island law requiring an adequate and comprehensive plan. The second survey statement of the Rhode Island School Terrorist Attack Preparedness survey focused on the usability and practical application of the emergency crisis plan. It stated, “Our school crisis plan is concise and easy to use in the event of an actual emergency crisis situation.” Based on the research survey results, 33% of schools fell into the “Strongly Agree” category, 44% into the “Agree” category, and 18% into the “Agree more than Disagree” category. Negative results of either “Disagree More than Agree” or “Disagree” were
logged for approximately 6% of the responding schools. Survey results for statement two are displayed in Figure 2.

Discussion

School crisis planning literature indicates a well prepared and comprehensive school crisis plan is a key component for the successful preparation for crisis and emergency situations. School safety experts, Michael and Chris Dorn (2005), specifically indicated the need for a school safety, security, and crisis plan. Additionally, Sally Dorman (2004) indicated 87% of American schools had emergency response plans in place, although they did not include all of the recommended components to make them adequate to prepare schools for the many potential crisis situations they may face. It is critical that schools not only develop a school crisis plan, but that the plan be one that is comprehensive and usable.

Rhode Island general laws 16-21-23 and 16-21-24 outline the specific requirements for an adequate emergency crisis plan. The results of the terrorist attack preparedness survey indicated that 18% of Rhode Island school administrators responding to the survey could only agree more than disagree that an adequate plan was in place. There seems to be a significant portion of Rhode Island schools that have minimally met the requirements for having an adequate emergency plan in place, potentially leaving students at risk. Additionally, almost 5% of administrator respondents clearly indicated that their opinion was that their particular school did not have an adequate plan in place at all. This result, in light research indicating a definitive need for an adequate crisis plan (Dorman, 2004; Dorn & Dorn, 2005; Paine, 2006) demonstrates
the likelihood that a significant portion of Rhode Island schools may not be as prepared for emergency situations as they could be.

An additional and equally important aspect of the emergency crisis plan is that the plan be one that is usable and practical so that it can actually be utilized effectively in the event of an emergency situation. Unfortunately, policies and procedures are sometimes developed with good intentions, but in a manner that results in such complication or overabundance of detail that the policy becomes less effective when it is needed most. The United States Department of Education (2007) has prepared a crisis planning guide to assist schools in adequately preparing for emergency situations, but the guide also indicates the need for the plan to be one that is usable and one that can practically be carried out in the event of an actual emergency. The results of the Rhode Island Terrorist Attack Preparedness Survey indicated that approximately 6% of respondents did not believe the emergency plan that they had in place is one that is “concise and easy to use in the event of an actual emergency crisis situation.” This is a troubling result, since there are most likely Rhode Island schools with a crisis plan in place that is rendered ineffective by complication or difficulty in actually using the plan in a time of need. A critical component of a comprehensive and adequate crisis plan is that the plan be sufficiently clear and concise so that it is usable in a time of need. Again, this result, in light research indicating a definitive need for an adequate crisis plan (Dorman, 2004; Dorn & Dorn, 2005; Paine, 2006) demonstrates the likelihood that a significant portion of Rhode Island schools may not be as prepared for emergency situations as they could be. Further recommendations for facilitating crisis plans that are
both comprehensive and usable are discussed in the recommendations section of this chapter.

**Research Question Two**

RQ2. To what extent have school crisis plans been developed and reviewed in conjunction with emergency professionals?

**Results**

Research question two addressed the extent to which Rhode Island school crisis plans had been developed and reviewed in conjunction with emergency professionals and the research question included survey responses three and four. Survey response three specifically addressed the manner in which the school crisis plan was developed focusing on whether or not it was created with input from local emergency management officials. Results indicated that 51.1% of the respondents were able to “Strongly Agree” with the statement and approximately 34% of respondents indicated they agreed or agreed more than disagreed. But, about 16% of administrators indicated a higher level of disagreement than agreement with the statement. Nine percent disagreed more than agreed, about six percent disagreed, and one school administrator strongly disagreed with the statement. Overall results for statement three are displayed in Figure 3.

The Rhode Island School Terrorism Preparedness Survey statement number four addressed a yearly review by safety officials and school leadership. The overall results showed that 26.1% of administrators strongly agreed, 13.6% agreed, and 21.6% agreed more than disagreed, for a total of 61.3% of school administrators indicating a more favorable response to the statement. Under 40% of the administrators responded with
one of the three negative categories; disagree more than agree, disagree, or strongly disagree. Overall results for statement four are displayed in Figure 4.

Discussion

Rhode Island law 16-21-23 specifically requires emergency crisis plans to be developed and reviewed in conjunction with local officials. Additionally, a United States Government Accountability Office report (2007) suggested all school emergency crisis plans be developed and reviewed in conjunction with local emergency personnel and governing officials. As first responders to a potential emergency crisis situation, it is critical that local official and emergency personnel be included in the planning and review of school crisis plans. It is logical to conclude that when local emergency personnel are involved in emergency crisis planning they will be better prepared to respond in the event of an emergency. Additionally, local officials and emergency personnel bring specific expertise that most likely will go beyond that of local school officials or school boards. The results of the Rhode Island Terrorism Preparedness Survey indicated that approximately 16% of respondents indicated their particular crisis plan was not developed in conjunction with local officials. This result is troubling in light of school safety literature, including Thompson (2004) and Alpert & Smith (2003), who indicate a definite need for crisis plans to be developed as a coordinated effort between the school and the community. This result also shows that approximately 16% of school administrators indicated that their particular school at some level was not in compliance with Rhode Island law and not applying accepted safety standards.

School safety literature indicates the need for emergency crisis plans to be consistently reviewed and updated (Stephens, 2006). The Department of Homeland
Security (2007) suggested that a critical component of school crisis preparedness included a regular review by community leaders and local first responders. This review allows for changes and updates to plans as local, national, and international terrorist threats change over time and as world conditions change. Without this consistent review, plans will become out of date and will not address current conditions or threats, leaving schools and students at risk. In light of the current literature concerning consistent plan review, the Rhode Island survey results are extremely troubling. Almost 40% of Rhode Island respondents indicated their school did not meet this critical safety standard, potentially leaving schools and students at risk.

**Research Question Three**

RQ3. To what extent are emergency crisis plans practiced and reviewed?

**Results**

Research question three addressed the degree to which emergency plans are practiced and reviewed. Question three included survey statements 5, 6, 12, 16, and 21. Results for Rhode Island Territorial Preparedness Survey statement five indicated almost 99% of administrator respondents indicated they could agree that emergency plans are adequately reviewed and practiced. Almost 72% of administrators indicating they strongly agreed with statement five. Overall results for statement five can be seen in Figure 5. Survey question six asks school administrators to rate the degree to which they could agree that school crisis plans were prepared and reviewed by different constituents within the school. Over 90% of those surveyed agreed with the statement at some level. Thirty-nine percent strongly agreed, while 32% agreed and 19% agreed more than disagreed. Overall results of survey statement six can be seen in Figure 6. Survey
statement number 12 addresses the practicing of drills in conjunction with community partners. Over 32% of school administrators disagreed with the statement, over 10% strongly disagreed, and over 17% disagreed more than agreed. Almost 60% of the total respondents indicated some level of disagreement with the statement regarding practicing emergency drills with community partners. Overall results for statement 12 are displayed in Figure 12. The Rhode Island School Terrorism Preparedness Survey statement number 16 address faculty and staff having access to the school crisis plan. Only a relatively small percentage of administrators responded with a negative response to statement 16. Of those responding negatively, 5.7% disagreed more than agreed and 1.1% disagreed. The overall results for survey statement 16 are displayed in Figure 16. Survey statement 21 addressed whether or not schools conduct simulations to prepare for actual crisis situations. Overall results for statement 21 showed that 20.9% of administrators disagreed, 18.6% disagreed more than agreed, and 4.7% strongly disagreed with the statement indicating simulations were conducted as part of crisis preparedness. In total, 44.2% of Rhode Island administrators responding to the survey indicated some level of disagreement with statement 21. Overall results for statement 21 are displayed in Figure 21.

Discussion

As part of a school safety study, the G.A.O. (2007) compiled school crisis and terrorism preparedness guidelines from several agencies; including Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, and the Department of Education. Common guidelines included the need for consistent review and practice of emergency crisis plans. The Department of Homeland Security (2007) also strongly suggested schools regularly
practice their crisis plan in conjunction with local community leaders and first responders. Trump (2008) further states that the current state of school preparedness requires better collaboration between schools and public safety officials. It is absolutely critical for schools to practice emergency plans with local officials so their effectiveness and practicality can be measured.

In light of the school safety preparedness literature with regard to regularly practicing plans with local officials the survey results show mixed results. Although a large portion of respondents indicated a fairly high level of agreement with meeting acceptable standards for generally reviewing and practicing plans, a severe discrepancy was shown in the area of involving local emergency and government officials in practicing drills and in conducting simulations. Approximately 60% of respondents indicated they did not practice crisis plans with local officials and emergency respondents. This presents a situation which may leave Rhode Island schools less prepared than they should be. If emergency crisis plans are not practiced using scenarios and situations that allow the school and local communities to simulate emergency scenarios, it is virtually impossible to recognize areas of strength or weakness with regard to the plan or the response. The results of research question three indicated the need to strongly suggest more specific guidelines with regard to the manner in which emergency crisis plan reviews and drills are conducted.

**Research Question Four**

RQ4. To what extent do emergency crisis plans include:

a. guidelines that coincide with a change in the federal color coded terrorist warning system?
b. acts of terror?

c. procedures for communicating with parents and students, including those who are limited-English proficient?

d. procedures for recovering from an incident, including continuing student education during an extended school closure?

e. provisions to address special needs students?

Results

Research question four gathered data relative to administrator perceptions regarding the degree to which their particular school crisis plan included specific crisis preparation elements. Research question four included survey statements seven through ten, as well as survey statement 13. Survey statement seven addresses the need to have specific guidelines to follow when the federal color-coded terrorism warning system status changes. Results of the statement showed that approximately 13.8% of respondents disagreed more than agreed, 37.9% disagreed, and 12.6% strongly disagreed. Over 64% of administrator respondents disagreed that their particular school changes guidelines to correspond with the federal color-coded terrorism warning system. The overall results of survey statement number seven can be seen as Figure 7.

The Rhode Island Terrorism Preparedness Survey statement number eight addresses the inclusion of terrorism attack preparedness within the overall school crisis plan. Almost 60% of respondents positively agreed with the statement. Approximately 40% of school administrators responding could not agree that their school crisis plan specifically addressed acts of terrorism. Approximately 17% disagreed more than
agreed, another 17% disagreed, and 4.6% strongly disagreed with the statement. Overall results for statement eight are displayed in Figure 8.

The ninth survey statement deals with the necessity of having written procedures for communicating with parents and students, including those who are limited-English proficient. Approximately 13% of school administrators disagreed more than agreed with the survey statement, and 13.8% of those surveyed indicated they disagreed with having written plans in place for communicating with parents and students including limited-English proficient families. Those administrators indicating strong disagreement with the statement totaled 2.3%. In total, approximately 30% of administrator respondents did not agree that their school had plans in place to communicate with parents and students, including limited-English proficient students. Overall results for statement nine are displayed in Figure 9.

The Rhode Island Terrorism Preparedness survey statement number 10 addresses the need to have plans in place to recover from a major crisis, including the ability to provide education services in the event of an extended school interruption. The overall responses indicate that the largest portion of respondents fell into the “disagree” category. Approximately 24% of school administrators surveyed disagreed with the statement. Another 19.5% disagreed more than agreed, and 6.9% strongly disagreed. Over 50% of the total respondents were not able to agree with having an extended education plan in place to assist in the recovery of a school crisis incident. The overall results for statement 10 are displayed in Figure 10.

Statement 13 specifically addresses a plan to assist special needs students in the event of an emergency crisis. Approximately 72% of administrator respondents
answered with some level of agreement. Approximately 23% strongly agreed, 27% agreed, and 22% agreed more than disagreed. Conversely, 28% of respondents generally disagreed with the statement. Approximately 13% disagreed more than agreed, 14% disagreed, and 1% strongly disagreed with having provisions in place to address special needs students in case of an emergency. Overall results for statement 13 are displayed in Figure 13.

Discussion

Guidelines as to specific elements that should be included in the school emergency crisis plan were identified through suggestions from school safety experts including the Department of Homeland Security (2007), U.S. Department of Education (2007), National School Safety Center (2005), National Association of School Resource Officers (2005), and the GAO (2007). These suggestions establish guidelines to assist in the creation of a comprehensive plan addressing the many facets required for full safety preparation, including terrorism preparedness.

The results of research question four showed that Rhode Island schools are not as prepared as they could be. Interestingly, as indicated in research question one, a large majority of administrators felt their schools had an adequate and comprehensive crisis plan in place. Yet, when specific results of research question four are applied to that statement, there appears to be discrepancies. When the specific research based recommended components of the crisis plan are inquired about, there are clear gaps in crisis and terrorist preparedness. A significant portion of schools surveyed do not include one or more of those elements identified as necessary to be included in a school crisis plan.
The National Association of School Resource Officers (2005) indicated the need for schools to coordinate school safety measures with changes in the Homeland Security terrorist threat levels. The results of the Rhode Island Terrorist Attack Preparedness Survey indicated over 64% of administrator respondents disagreed that their particular school responds in some way to changes with the federal color-coded terrorism warning system and almost 40% of administrator respondents indicated their school does not specifically address acts of terror at all in the school crisis plan. School safety experts Michael and Chris Dorn (2005) recommend schools specifically prepare for the possibility mass casualty incidents including large-scale terrorist attacks on schools. The Rhode Island response showed a high degree of similarity with a study completed by Green (2006) in Illinois which indicated a large percentage of schools did have school crisis plans, but less than half had specific provisions for terrorism preparation.

A United States Government Accountability Office report (2007) compiled school emergency preparedness recommendations from several federal agencies and identified the need to be able to communicate with limited-English proficient students and parents, to address special needs students, and to have in place a plan to continue education services in an extended school closure. Based on the results of the study survey, there are potential concerns in Rhode Island terrorism preparedness. Approximately 30% of respondents indicated their school did not have plans in place to specifically communicate with limited-English proficient students. In a mass casualty scenario this places this particular group of students at significant risk. Similarly, those with special needs are placed at risk since 28% of respondents disagreed with having a plan in place to assist special needs students in the event of an emergency crisis situation. Unfortunately,
the survey results indicated the neediest student populations may be at risk. Additionally, over 50% of respondents indicated they did not agree with having an extended education plan in place in case of a long term recovery. This poses significant risk of interruption to the educational needs of all Rhode Island students in the event of a serious school crisis incident.

Research Question Five

RQ5. To what extent do schools receive adequate support and funding to be prepared for an emergency crisis situation?

Results

Research question five addressed administrator opinions regarding the degree to which schools received financial support dedicated to school safety and crisis preparation. Question five included Rhode Island School Terrorism Preparedness Survey statement 11 and asked school administrators if they felt their particular school received adequate funding and resources to prepare for emergency and safety situations. The Rhode Island Terrorism Preparedness Survey results indicated that the largest percentage of school administrators disagreed more than agreed with being provided adequate support and funding. Almost 28% of administrators disagreed more than agreed, while another 17.2% disagreed and 18.4% strongly disagreed. Overall, over 63% of administrators did not feel their particular school received adequate funding or resources to prepare for emergency situations. The overall results for statement 11 are displayed in Figure 11.
Discussion

If we are to adequately protect schools, it is critical that we provide the resources necessary to do so. Trump and Lavarello (2003) indicated that American schools are susceptible to terrorist attack and it is critical that schools take steps and allocate resources necessary to protect school communities. Again, the Rhode Island Terrorism Preparedness Survey revealed a potential area of concern regarding the protection of Rhode Island schools and Rhode Island students. Over 63% of survey respondents indicated they did not believe their particular school was adequately funded or did not receive the necessary resources to prepare for emergency situations. It is not a stretch to take the fact that a large percentage of administrators feel they are not properly supported or funded to be prepared for emergency situations and extrapolate that to mean Rhode Island schools are not as safe as they should be. Clearly, Rhode Island school administrators do not believe they have been given the necessary tools to fully protect their schools and school personnel. This opinion must be taken in conjunction with the fact that we are in a time where finances are tight in many areas and therefore this sentiment may be able to be applied to many areas of education. Never the less, the results of this area concerning and they deserve further study and investigation.

Research Question Six

RQ6. To what extent is safety and emergency preparedness training provided for faculty, staff and administrators?

Results

Research question six addresses emergency procedure training provided to faculty, staff, and administrators. Research question six included survey statements 15
and 19. Survey statement number 15 addresses the need for schools to conduct training for faculty and staff regarding safety and emergency crisis procedures. With regard to Rhode Island schools, the overall results for survey statement 15 revealed the largest percentage of school administrators (43.7%) agreed that faculty and staff had been provided adequate safety and security training. Additionally, 21.8% strongly agreed with the statement and another 21.8% agreed more than disagreed. Approximately 87% of administrators overall agreed at some level with having specific safety training in place for faculty and staff. Approximately 9% of administrators disagreed more than agreed with the statement and another 3.4% disagreed with statement 15. Results for statement 15 are displayed in Figure 15.

Rhode Island Terrorist Preparedness Survey statement 19 specifically addressed the training provided to school administrators. Overall results for statement 19 showed that 21.8% of school administrators selected the “Disagree” category. Additionally, 9.2% of respondents indicating they disagreed more than agreed and 10.3% of school administrators strongly disagreed with having received specific professional training relative to school safety and terrorism. A total of 41.3% of school administrators disagreed at some level with the statement indicating they received adequate training in the area of school safety. Overall results for statement 19 of the Rhode Island School Terrorist Preparedness Survey are displayed in Figure 19.

Discussion

Training is a key component to safety and emergency preparedness. Trump and Lavarello (2003) indicated how important it is that school staff be provided with safety and security training, and specifically terrorist attack training. Additionally, Sharma
(2004) suggested that schools would be much better prepared for terrorist attacks if they were providing safety and security training for both teachers and students. A study conducted by National Association of School Resource Officers (2005) indicated that over 71% of the school districts did not provide any specific terrorist attack training for faculty and staff.

The Rhode Island School Terrorism Preparedness survey results for research question six revealed a disparity in the training provided to faculty and staff as compared to school administrators. As indicated by administrator responses, a significantly larger percentage of faculty and staff receive safety and security training as compared to administrators themselves. Over 40% of school administrators indicated some level of disagreement regarding receiving safety and security training. Again, this researcher believes this to be a potential area of concern regarding emergency and terrorist preparedness in Rhode Island schools. It is critical that school leaders be afforded safety training so as to better lead their schools in the area of school safety, security, and terrorist preparedness.

**Research Question Seven**

Research question seven addressed the extent to which administrators believed schools to be prepared for an emergency crisis by providing:

a. a classroom emergency crisis bag containing emergency supplies and information?
   
b. several different means of communicating?
   
c. adequate building and perimeter security?
   
d. school blueprints and information to law enforcement?
Results

Research question seven included school administrator opinions based on responses from terrorism preparedness survey statements 14, 17, 18, 20, 22, and 23. Survey statement 14 addressed whether or not the school has specifically conducted a safety analysis. Overall statement results showed a troubling 34% of administrators disagreed with the statement to some degree. Figure 14 displays the overall results of Rhode Island School Preparedness Survey Statement 14. The Rhode Island School Terrorism Preparedness Survey statement 18 addressed the need for more than one means of communication to be available in the event of an emergency. Responses from school administrators indicated 17% disagreed at some level with statement 18. Overall results for survey statement 18 are displayed in Figure 18. Over 47% of Rhode Island administrators responding to the survey indicated some level of disagreement with having provided classrooms with an emergency crisis bag and supplies. Overall results for survey statement 17 are displayed in Figure 17. Survey statement 20 addressed administrator perceptions with regard to overall school safety. Almost 30% of Rhode Island school administrators responding to the survey indicated some level of disagreement with their school having adequate security. This is an extremely concerning result of the Rhode Island School Terrorism Preparedness Survey. Overall results for statement 20 are displayed in Figure 20. Survey statement 22 attempted to gather information relative to the degree to which schools identify and record information about school visitors particularly those who are vendors or service personnel. Research survey results showed that a large percentage (33%) of administrators indicated their school did not identify and record information about service personnel. Survey statement
results for statement 22 are displayed in Figure 22. Statement 23 of the Rhode Island School Terrorist Preparedness Survey addressed the state requirement for local law enforcement and emergency personnel to have a copy of the school blueprints, floor plans, and diagrams. This information is critical for an appropriate and quick response in an emergency situation. Over 19% of Rhode Island administrator respondents disagreed at some level with survey statement 23. Overall results are displayed in Figure 23.

Discussion

A GAO report (2007) in which emergency preparedness recommendations from the Department of Education, Department of Homeland Security, and Health and Human Services were compiled, stressed the importance of school security, providing classroom supplies, and the importance of communication. Safety and security literature indicates that schools may be considered soft targets for terrorism because they generally do not have the same level of security as other targets, such as government buildings and airports (Dorn & Dorn, 2005). Additionally, American School and University (2008) indicated that educational professionals have reported that school security incidents are becoming more frequent and more severe. Almost 30% of survey respondents disagreed at some level with the statement indicating their particular Rhode Island school had adequate security. This is something that can and should be improved. Although there clearly needs to be a balance between security and maintaining a comfortable educational environment, schools should not continue to be at increased risk for because they lack security.

Rhode Island general statute 16-21-24 (Rhode Island General Assembly, n.d.) indicates schools must provide adequate means of communication in the event of a
terrorist or crisis event. It also states schools should provide building plans and blueprints to local authorities to assist in the event of an emergency situation. The survey results indicated over 19% of respondents disagreed with the statement indicating they had provided access to these plans. Additionally, providing each classroom with emergency supplies to be used in the event of a crisis situation is a recommended practice (GAO, 2007) and may save lives in the event of an emergency situation. Again, the results of the Rhode Island Terrorist Preparedness Survey showed a significant negative response to this safety recommendation. Over 47% of respondents indicated some level of disagreement with the statement indicating their classrooms were provided with emergency crisis bag supplies. This is a fairly simple emergency crisis suggestion that could help save lives in an emergency situation and emergency classroom supplies should be more widely utilized in Rhode Island schools.

Research Question Eight

Results

Research question eight included survey statement 24 and addressed the overall opinions of school administrators regarding the degree to which they believed a large scale terror attack was a possibility that required preparation. The Rhode Island School Terrorism Preparedness Survey results revealed surprising and concerning attitudes among a significant percentage of Rhode Island school administrators. Over 35% of administrators disagreed with a school terrorism attack being something that was possible and something that should be prepared for. Overall survey results for statement 24 are displayed in Figure 24.
Discussion

The school safety literature clearly indicates terrorist attacks on schools are plausible and require preparation. Michael and Chris Dorn (2005), well respected school safety experts, indicate there is a real possibility schools may be terrorist attack targets because of their vulnerability, potential for significant loss, and the psychological impact associated with an attack on children. Additionally, in a survey conducted by the National Association of School Resource Officers (2005), over 90% of police officers felt their schools were potential soft targets of terrorism. They also indicated that school terrorist attack preparedness is severely lacking and an issue of concern.

Possibly the most dangerous and concerning result of the Rhode Island School Terrorism Preparedness Survey is the indication that a large percentage of school administrators do not agree with safety experts in regard to the possibility of a school terrorist attack. Cavanagh (2004) stated that security experts believed school leaders had become complacent about school security since the Columbine attack, despite the 9/11 terrorist attack in New York City. His research seems to support the results of the survey. If a large portion of school administrators do not see a terrorist attack as something to prepare for, it is highly likely that they will not prepare for such a possibility. This increases the dangerous likelihood that a significant population of Rhode Island school students may be in situations where they are not adequately protected in the event of an unthinkable attack in Rhode Island.
Research Question Nine

Results

Research question nine included survey statement 25 and addressed the overall opinions of Rhode Island School administrators with regard to school preparation for emergency situations including terrorist attacks. The overall results of survey statement 25 indicated that 25% of school administrators indicated some level of disagreement with being prepared for crisis and terrorist attack scenarios.

Discussion

Safety and terrorism experts and literature indicate that schools are possible terrorist attack targets and therefore, for the safety of students, it is important to prepare for emergency situations including terrorist attack (Abdullaev, 2004; Dorn, 2005; National Association of School Resource Officers, 2005; Trump and Lavarello, 2003). When the results of question nine are taken in context with the results of research question eight, it produces a troubling safety picture. A significant portion (35%) of Rhode Island administrators responding the Rhode Island School Terrorist Attack Preparedness Survey indicated that they did not believe a school terrorist attack was a possibility that school administrators should prepare for. Research question nine attempted to determine the perceptions of school administrators with regard to emergency situations including terrorist attack. Since one-fourth of administrators indicated some disagreement with being prepared and 35% indicated they did not believe terrorist attacks were something to prepare for, this produces a potentially dangerous Rhode Island school terrorist preparedness picture. It is clearly juxtaposed to the school safety literature indicating the need for schools to prepare for crisis situations including terrorist attacks.
Recommendations

The results of the Rhode Island School Terrorist Preparedness survey and the subsequent discussion of those results, naturally lend themselves to recommendations for improving the state of preparedness in Rhode Island. The survey results indicate a number of areas that deserve attention and thought so as to provide additional opportunity for improvement in the overall safety preparation, and particularly terrorist attack preparation in Rhode Island schools. The school crisis plan is the central component of school preparedness for terrorist attack as it should be a comprehensive and coordinated effort of preparation and response to terror (Dorman, 2004; Dorn & Dorn, 2005; Paine, 2006). The state of Rhode Island has delineated fairly clear guidelines for crisis plan requirements through Sections 16-21-23 and 16-21-24 of Rhode Island state statutes. The survey results regarding that requirement seem to indicate a fairly high degree of compliance, yet 5% of respondents still disagreed at some level with an adequate plan being in place and 6% of respondents indicated the plan was not concise and easy to use in the event of an emergency. Additionally, the results of the survey indicated some concern regarding the manner in which the plans were developed, reviewed, and practiced.

The researcher recommends the inclusion of additional accountability at the state level relative to meeting the state requirements for crisis plans. It is recommended that each school administrator be required to sign off that the school has an adequate and comprehensive crisis plan in place, referencing the specifically required components. This added step in compliance may be enough to raise awareness and increase compliance with Rhode Island state crisis plan requirements. This process could be
added as part of the yearly Health and Safety sign off required of each Rhode Island school leader. Rather than a generic sign off indicating that a school safety plan is in place, the Department of Education should add the details of the safety plan requirements as part of the sign off, including the various elements that should be included in the plan.

Additionally, the researcher recommends each school conduct a yearly full scale practice of the emergency crisis plan coordinated with local emergency and government officials. This practice session will help to identify areas of strength and weakness within the plan, helping to demonstrate not only the adequacy of the plan, but if the plan is reasonably concise and easy to use. The researcher also recommends each teacher within a given school system be required to sign off that he or she has read and understands the district and school policies, including emergency policies and the school crisis plan. This will be another way to help increase accountability on the part of teachers and the district, as some teachers will undoubtedly not sign off on reading and understanding policies if they are not adequately provided by the district and provided in a manner that is understandable to them.

The researcher commends Rhode Island for their researched based requirement to include many different aspects of the educational community when designing the crisis plan; students, teachers, parents, administrators and safety experts (Rhode Island General Assembly, n.d.), but recommends that the input of those considered not to be safety experts be taken as integral to the plan being one that is usable and concise. The practicality of a crisis plan is one of the keys to its success. Unfortunately, those who are experts may craft a plan that is complicated and confusing to those implementing and carrying out the plan on an educational front. For this reason, it is strongly suggested that
the crisis plan creation, implementation, and practice reviews intimately involve those who are not experts, and that the school district conduct a post-event meeting after an emergency practice session that highly considers the input of teachers, students, parents, and school administrators, those typically not considered to be the experts in school safety.

The researcher again commends the Rhode Island Department of Education for requiring a comprehensive school safety plan and for outlining the required elements with some specificity. But based on the results of the Rhode Island Terrorist Attack Preparedness Survey and associated research regarding crisis plans, the researcher further recommends that the state of Rhode Island Commissioner of Education, lawmakers, and policy makers consider further reviews of the requirements of school safety plans and crisis response plans. Specifically, it is recommended that the requirements include guidelines that coincide with a change in the federal terrorist warning system and specifically include elements that address acts of terror as part of the plan. Although there is overlap in much of safety and crisis preparedness to include elements that would be appropriate in a terrorist situation, the actual inclusion of such wording will potentially change mindsets and attitudes to allow for the consideration of such an event and better preparation for such an event.

As a school administrator, the researcher can speak from a place of experience with regard to the myriad of responsibilities placed on the local school leader. The researcher suggests that each school district, large and small, appoint a school safety officer whose responsibility, in part, along with other leaders and superintendents, will be to coordinate school safety procedures and policies. In the largest of Rhode Island school
districts, this may be a separate full time administrative position or a school resource
officer, and in smaller districts it may fall under the responsibility of a separate lower
level administrator or central office person. This safety officer will be responsible to
make sure the school is in compliance with Rhode Island law and with best practices
regarding school safety and security, including terrorist attack preparedness. The school
safety officer would stay in close contact with the Rhode Island Emergency Management
Agency and specifically the School Safety Program arm of RIEMA. The results of the
Rhode Island School Terrorist Attack Preparedness Study often showed that even areas
that were already included as part of a required Rhode Island crisis plan element were not
found to be actually put into practice when the data from school leaders was collected.

In addition, the Rhode Island Terrorist Attack Preparedness study showed that
over 63% of school administrators did not believe there was adequate funding or
resources provided to be prepared for emergency crisis situations. This is a troubling
result, potentially indicating that our schools may be lacking safety or security due to
financial constraints. Safety is not something that should be compromised and therefore
it is critical that school districts and administrators be given what they need to keep the
educational community safe. It is recommended that school leaders communicate this
sense to superintendents who then must use official channels to express this deep concern
to the Rhode Island Department of Education and policymakers. School administrators
should also use professional organizations such as the Rhode Island Association of
School Principals to communicate this concern and employ this avenue as a means for
advocating for more funding and better resources dedicated to school safety in Rhode
Island.
Additionally, the researcher suggests that parents and parent groups be made aware of this troubling fact regarding the underfunding for safety and security, and that they are encouraged to voice their opinions in these matters to school leaders, school committees, and school boards. School leaders should bring safety and security resources and funding concerns to school committee and board meetings to make it a matter of public record. This format will also give community members the opportunity to be aware of this situation and to comment and express concern in a public forum. School leaders and policymakers, particularly those who are elected leaders, generally value the opinions of their constituents, so what is valuable to parents and students, very often becomes valuable to those making policy decisions.

The Rhode Island Terrorist Attack Preparedness Study revealed some concerning results regarding emergency preparedness training. Approximately 9% of school administrators responded in a manner indicating that training was not provided for faculty and staff in the area of school safety and security. Additionally, a total of 41.3% of school administrators disagreed at some level with the statement indicating they personally received adequate training in the area of school safety. It is strongly suggested that school safety training be a required component of personal professional development for both teachers and administrators. The previously suggested requirement to have faculty members sign off regarding reading and understanding district safety procedures will also encourage school faculty to take this area of school life seriously and hopefully encourage individually teachers to take personal steps to receiving professional training in this area.
Additionally, the researcher suggests that individual school boards and committees take it upon themselves to provide safety and security training for their individual schools and districts. It is critical that individual school boards take on some personal responsibility to prepare their schools and leaders in the area of school crisis preparedness. As the policy governing body in a particular town or private school, the school board must take on the protection and safety of the students they serve. Therefore they must take action to provide the necessary resources and training required to adequately prepare and protect their particular educational community. It is also suggested that higher education institutions and state teacher certification requirements include elements of school safety and crisis preparation as part of the educator licensure and certification process for both teachers and administrators. This requirement could be accomplished through a school safety course or a portion of a course that is dedicated to the area of school safety. More knowledgeable and prepared teachers and administrators will result in safer schools.

Almost 30% of Rhode Island school administrators responding to the Rhode Island Terrorism Preparedness Survey indicated some level of disagreement with their school having adequate security. This is an extremely concerning result of the study and one that deserves further recommendations. The researcher strongly recommends this be another area that the school safety officer previously mentioned would take responsibility for. As part of assessing school security, the safety officer would take on the role of keeping and compiling all safety and emergency data, and then analyzing that data to identify areas of concern and safety trends. As part of the safety assessment, each school should conduct a yearly site safety and security inspection to include building security,
school property and perimeter security, and visitor/contractor security. This safety assessment should be conducted by emergency security experts in conjunction with local school officials and emergency responders. It is suggested that local police departments should have a school liaison officer appointed so there is clear and frequent line of communication between local law enforcement and the school. This communication can be directed to the school safety officer, resource officer, or to another specific individual appointed to oversee school security. Larger school districts may want to consider hiring outside experts who specialize in school safety and security to conduct a yearly site visit.

Approximately 25% of school administrators responding to the survey indicated some level of disagreement with being prepared for emergency crisis situations, including acts of terror. Additionally, over 35% of school administrators responded with some level of disagreement with the statement indicating that terrorist attacks are a possibility requiring attention and preparation. This attitude contradicts the research and literature regarding terrorist attacks and schools. Michael and Chris Dorn (2005), well respected school safety experts, indicate there is a real possibility schools may be terrorist attack targets and over 90% of the National Association of School Resource Officers (2005) felt their schools were potential soft targets of terrorism. The researcher commends the state of Rhode Island for providing resources and guidance for school safety through the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency, but recommends a higher profile focus on terror. Resources, training, and sample crisis plans are provided through the RIEMA website to assist schools in preparing for emergency crisis situations, but it is suggested that RIEMA specifically include the category “terrorist attack” as part of the overall preparedness categories. Although, there are several categories that could be considered
to be overlapping with the terrorist attack category, such as “Intruder/Hostage,” there is no specific category raising awareness for the possibility of a terrorist attack targeting a school (RIEMA, 2011). Additionally, as previously mentioned, it is suggested that Rhode Island law and education policy include guidelines that coincide with a change in the federal terrorist warning system, and specifically addressing acts of terror as part of the plan. This will raise awareness for Rhode Island administrators in regards to terrorist attack preparation and will in some way specifically tie Rhode Island school crisis preparation to the terror atmosphere in the world and in the nation.

**Limitations**

One aspect of the results of this study showed a potential limitation of survey research in general and stood out to the researcher as a possible complicating factor. The was a real possibility of an inherent desire for school administrators to want their school and/or district to be perceived as prepared for a terrorist attack, feeling that whatever response is given will in some way reflect on the administrator. This may present a bias in the responses of the school administrator sample toward overstating preparedness. While the responses may be accurate and honest, there still exists the possibility of the intentional or unintentional skewing of results toward preparedness. It is only logical that administrators would most likely want their particular school or district to be seen in a good light, as this may reflect upon the leadership of the school or district.

Another limitation of the survey responses may be based upon some sort of fear of retaliation for certain responses. Although the survey was specifically portrayed as completely anonymous, school administrators may have felt that there was some risk involved that their particular responses could somehow be attributed to themselves. This
had the potential to limit the honesty and accuracy of some survey results, particularly statements that could be a reflection of other district leaders, administrators, boards, or superintendents. Research question five addresses the support of funding and resources that are devoted to safety and emergency crisis preparation. School administrators may have been fearful to indicate they did not receive the proper resources and funding to keep Rhode Island students safe.

Although the Rhode Island School Terrorist Preparedness Survey statements were reviewed by educators and school officials for clarity and ambiguity issues, there still may have been limitations with the survey statements. The survey was created, reviewed, and then edited based on expert suggestions. The survey reliability was tested utilizing the reliability measurement tool Chronbach’s Alpha and was found to have a reliability coefficient of .95 well above the acceptable reliability coefficient of .70. Even though field testing, expert review, and reliability testing was conducted, the researcher recognized that several survey statements attempted to gain perceptions on several related, but slightly different terrorist preparation items. For example, survey statement number four attempted to address the yearly review of the emergency crisis plan, but included two different constituencies within the statement. It asked about reviews conducted by both school leadership and safety officials. It is conceivable that yearly reviews could be conducted by one group, but not the other, making the survey statement potentially confusing to respond to and the results potentially difficult to quantify.

Once the surveys were collected, reviewed, and compiled, other questions may arise which would add to the depth and completeness of the study. Follow up interviews may have helped gain a better understanding of the survey responses. Open-ended
discussions with school administrators would be time consuming, but may produce input
that would bring clarity and a deeper understanding of the terrorist attack and crisis
preparedness status of Rhode Island schools. Post survey interviews and group
discussions may help give insight into the specific reasons why school administrators
responded to the survey in the manner in which they did.

The last study limitation was the size of the responding population. The initial
survey was sent to 486 school administrators and 90 school administrators responded to
the survey. An additional 10 administrators were randomly selected from the Rhode
Island Educational Directory, contacted by phone, and then they also completed the
electronic survey. The total survey responses were 100, making up over 20% of Rhode
Island administrators. Although the survey results represented between 26,804 and
50,253 Rhode Island students, a larger sample size may provide more accurate and
complete results.

**Recommendations for Further Study**

The results of this study indicate further investigation into the specific safety
measures taken by Rhode Island schools as compared to actual state requirements and
suggestions from safety experts would have a positive impact on the available body of
research with regard to school safety. Additionally, it would specifically contribute to the
resources of information available to Rhode Island educators and school leaders when
examining school safety and terrorist preparation. The researcher also recommends
follow up specifically with regard to survey statements 24 and 25 where a significant
portion of administrators both indicated they did not believe they were properly prepared
for a terrorist attack and indicated they did not believe preparation for such attack was
necessary. When this information is examined against the opinions of school resource officers who overwhelmingly believe this issue to be one of significance (National Association of School Resource Officers, 2005), it begs for further study into this disparity of opinion.

Another recommendation on the macro scale is for the replication of this or a similar type study in various states to examine their preparation for safety and terrorism issues. These studies would further the body of research and give results that could be compared and contrasted with this study in Rhode Island. The results of other state studies would put the Rhode Island School Terrorism Attack Preparedness study in perspective relative to other jurisdictions. On the micro scale, this particular study could be replicated and specifically tied to a single school or school district to help individual school examine safety standards and terrorist attack preparation levels. Additionally, an examination of terrorist attack preparedness correlated to variables such as school size, school location (suburban, rural, urban), or school type (public, private independent, or Catholic) could yield data that would assist in identifying preparation strengths and weaknesses. Data from both the macro replication and micro replication would provide information demonstrating preparation strengths, weaknesses, and would provide opportunities for states and individual K-12 schools to improve. The study could also be replicated or similar studies could be conducted in the arena of higher education. These studies would require an examination and inclusion of general school safety and terrorist attack preparation issues as well as the addition of specific recommendations and issues that are exclusive to the college or university campus.
A final recommendation of further study would be follow up interviews with Rhode Island administrators asking open ended questions. The addition of this data and anecdotal information would contribute to the breadth and depth of the study by providing details and input that may not be able to be extrapolated from Likert scale survey results. This type of follow up interview would allow for more probing regarding responses and a better understand of what may be at the heart of administrator responses. Additionally, follow up interviews could be paired with site visits and an examination of existing school crisis plan documents. It would assist in identifying actual practices within Rhode Island schools as compared to suggested practices and current Rhode Island law.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the current state of Rhode Island schools with regard to safety preparation and terrorist attack preparedness. The results of the Rhode Island School Terrorist Attack Preparedness Survey showed there were some significant discrepancies in the research based recommendations and state requirements when compared to the attitudes and practices of Rhode Island schools and school administrators. School administrator responses indicated Rhode Island schools may have particular weaknesses in several areas. Although school crisis plans seemed to be adequately reviewed, district officials did not meet on a yearly basis with police, fire, and emergency personnel to the degree that may be necessary for adequate school protection. Administrator responses also seemed to indicate a poorly coordinated school response to a change in the federal terrorist warning system, which may leave Rhode Island schools vulnerable when there are heightened terrorist threats in the world. Additionally, Rhode
Island school terrorist preparedness responses seem to indicate there is not enough preparation for recovery from acts of terror or crisis situations, nor enough funding or support being devoted to allow schools to be adequately prepared. A significant portion of Rhode Island administrators indicated they do not provide emergency crisis bags for school classrooms and that the school administrator had not received specific training in the area of school safety and terrorism.

This study provides an outline of the recommended practices as provided by school safety experts and law enforcement officials. These items are designed to help protect schools and school communities, and when applied to the results of the Rhode Island School Terrorist Attack Preparedness Survey, provide a better understanding of those areas needing improvement if Rhode Island schools are to be properly prepared and protected. Additionally, the study provides insight into the opinions and perceptions of Rhode Island school administrators. These opinions and perceptions, when taken into consideration juxtaposed with the research based recommended practices, provide an opportunity for further discussion and follow up, as well as an opportunity for improvement to Rhode Island school safety. It is recommended that particular safety and terrorism preparedness weaknesses be considered for further review and for inclusion in Rhode Island Department of Education discussions as they relate to school safety.
References


Krisberg, K. (2007, March). School preparedness crucial for safety of children,


N.C.E.S. (2005). *Projected number of participants in educational institutions.* Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d05/tables/dt05_001.asp?referer=list


§ 16-21-23 School safety plans – School safety teams and school crisis response teams. – (a) The school committee of each town, city, and regional school department shall adopt a comprehensive school safety plan regarding crisis intervention, emergency response, and management. The plan shall be developed by a school safety team comprised of representatives of the school committee, representatives of student, teacher, and parent organizations, school safety personnel, school administration, and members of local law enforcement, fire, and emergency personnel. Members of the school safety team shall be appointed by the school committee of the town, city, or regional school district.

(b) The school crisis response team shall be comprised of those selected school personnel willing to serve as members of a psychological response team to address the psychological and emotional needs of the school community.
CHAPTER 16-21
Health and Safety of Pupils

SECTION 16-21-24

§ 16-21-24 Requirements of school safety plans, school emergency response plans, and school crisis response plans. – (a) School safety plans, as required by this chapter, shall include and address, but not to be limited to, the following policies and procedures:

(1) Policies and procedures for responding to violence by students, teachers, other school personnel as well as visitors to the school;

(2) Policies and procedures for responding to acts of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel and visitors to the school;

(3) Appropriate prevention and intervention strategies which are based on data to target priority needs and which make use of effective actions based on currently accepted best practice;

(4) Collaborative arrangements with state and local law enforcement officials, designed to ensure that school safety officers and other security personnel are adequately trained, including being trained to de-escalate potentially violent situations, and are effectively and fairly recruited;

(5) Policies and procedures for contacting appropriate law enforcement officials and EMS/Fire, in the event of a violent incident;

(6) Policies and procedures for notification and activation of the school crisis response team;

(7) Policies and procedures for contacting parents, guardians, or persons in parental relation to the students of the city, town, or region in the event of a violent incident;

(8) Policies and procedures relating to school building security, including where appropriate the use of school safety officers and/or security devices or procedures;

(9) Policies and procedures for the dissemination of informative materials regarding the early detection of potentially violent behaviors, including but not limited to, the
identification of family, community, and environmental factors, to teachers, administrators, school personnel, persons in parental relation to students of the city, town, or region students and other persons deemed appropriate to receive that information;

(10) Policies and procedures for annual school safety training and a review of the school crisis response plan for staff and students;

(11) Protocols for responding to bomb threats, hostage-takings, intrusions, and kidnappings;

(12) Strategies for improving communication among students and between students and staff and reporting of potentially violent incidents, such as the establishment of youth-run programs, peer mediation, conflict resolution, creating a forum or designating a mentor for students concerned with bullying or violence, and establishing anonymous reporting mechanisms for school violence;

(13) A description of the duties of hall monitors and any other school safety personnel, including the school crisis response team, and the training requirements of all personnel acting in a school security capacity;

(14) Policies and procedures for providing notice of threats of violence or harm to the student or school employee who is the subject of the threat. The policy shall define "threats of violence or harm" to include violent actions and threats of violent actions either individually or by groups, but shall not include conduct or comments that a reasonable person would not seriously consider to be a legitimate threat;

(15) Policies and procedures for disclosing information that is provided to the school administrators about a student's conduct, including, but not limited to, the student's prior disciplinary records, and history of violence, to classroom teachers, school staff, and school security, if they have been determined by the principal to have a legitimate need for the information in order to fulfill their professional responsibilities and for protecting such information from any further disclosure; and

(16) Procedures for determining whether or not any threats or conduct established in the policy may be grounds for discipline of the student. School districts, school committees, school officials, and school employees providing notice in good faith as required and consistent with the committee's policies adopted under this section are immune from any liability arising out of such notification.

(b) School safety plans, as required by this chapter, shall further include school emergency response plans specific to each school building contained within each city, town, or regional school district. School emergency response plans shall include, and address, but not be limited to, the following elements:

(1) Policies and procedures for the safe evacuation of students, teachers, and other school personnel as well as visitors to the school in the event of a serious violent incident
or other emergency, which shall include evacuation routes and shelter sites and procedures for addressing medical needs, transportation, and emergency notification to persons in parental relation to a student. For purposes of this subdivision, "serious violent incident" means an incident of violent criminal conduct that is, or appears to be, life threatening and warrants the evacuation of students and/or staff;

(2) Designation of an emergency response team comprised of school personnel, local law enforcement officials, and representatives from local regional and/or state emergency response agencies, other appropriate incident response teams including a school crisis response team, and a post-incident response team that includes appropriate school personnel, medical personnel, mental health counselors, and others who can assist the school community in coping with the aftermath of a violent incident;

(3) Procedures for assuring that crisis response and law enforcement officials have access to floor plans, blueprints, schematics, or other maps of the school interior and school grounds, and road maps of the immediate surrounding area;

(4) Establishment of internal and external communication systems in emergencies;

(5) Definition of the chain of command in a manner consistent with the national interagency incident management system/incident command system;

(6) Procedures for review and the conduct of drills and other exercises to test components of the emergency response plan; and

(7) Policies and procedures for securing and restricting access to the crime scene in order to preserve evidence in cases of violent crimes on school property.
Appendix C - Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability Test

Questions 1-6 and Calculations

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Appendix C (continued)

Questions 16-25

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Appendix D- Email Participant Letter

Dear School Principal:

My name is Michael Dube, and I am the Principal at Masters Regional Academy in Smithfield. I am also a former Connecticut State Trooper and currently gathering data for my doctoral dissertation study as part of a doctorate in Education Administration.

The subject of my research concerns Rhode Island school crisis preparedness, specifically focusing on terrorist attack preparedness. I am requesting your assistance in the collection of this important data. It is my hope that this information will help Rhode Island schools better serve those who are part of our school communities and to become increasingly cognizant of the need to be prepared to deal with unpredictable situations that negatively impact Rhode Island’s students. My goal is to gather data from as many public and private schools in Rhode Island as possible to gain an accurate understanding of the safety preparedness for unpredictable situations. Your input is a valuable part of this preparedness picture.

Your participation is completely voluntary and your input will be strictly confidential and anonymous. There is absolutely no penalty for those choosing not to participate in this study. Any person that completes a survey is entitled to a copy of the results. Please provide me an e-mail with such a request and I will be sure to forward you a copy. That being said, I would be grateful if you would complete the Rhode Island School Terrorism Preparedness survey by ____________ and help Rhode Island schools improve.

The survey contains approximately 25 questions and will take 10 minutes or less to complete. Please click the link below to complete the survey. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research study please feel free to contact Dr. F. Garzon at Liberty University’s Institutional Review Board (fgarzon@liberty.edu). Any other questions can be directed to my advisor or me at the contact information below.

Thank you and sincerely,

Michael W.M. Dube, M.A.T.    Dr. Kathie Morgan
mwdube@liberty.edu    kcjohnso@liberty.edu

Survey Link:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=g1muYBiOGdw6a0cyvNO_2fLg_3d_3d
Appendix E- Likert Scale School Terrorism Preparedness Survey
### 2. Part Two

#### Terrorism Preparedness Survey

1. **Please mark the answer that best indicates your response.**

   Our school has an adequate and comprehensive school crisis plan in place.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree more than Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree more than Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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2. **Please mark the answer that best indicates your response.**

   Our school crisis plan is concise and easy to use in the event of an actual emergency crisis situation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree more than Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree more than Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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3. **Please mark the answer that best indicates your response.**

   Our school crisis plan was developed in conjunction with law enforcement, fire safety officials, emergency medical officials, as well as health and mental health professionals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree more than Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree more than Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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4. **Please mark the answer that best indicates your response.**

   District and/or school officials meet yearly with police, fire, emergency medical services, emergency management agencies, and other public safety officials to review and revise the school emergency crisis plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree more than Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree more than Agree</th>
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5. **Please mark the answer that best indicates your response.**

   Our school participates in regular emergency crisis drills including lockdown, evacuation, and shelter in place.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree more than Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree more than Agree</th>
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6. Please mark the answer that best indicates your response.

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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree more than Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree more than Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tr>
<td>Our school includes/included various school constituencies (teachers, administrators, students, and support staff) in the preparation and review of crisis emergency plans.</td>
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7. Please mark the answer that best indicates your response.

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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree more than Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree more than Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tr>
<td>Our school has specific guidelines to follow when the federal color-coded terrorist warning system status changes.</td>
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8. Please mark the answer that best indicates your response.

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<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree more than Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree more than Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our school crisis plan specifically addresses acts of terror.</td>
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9. Please mark the answer that best indicates your response.

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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<th>Agree more than Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree more than Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tr>
<td>Our school crisis plan includes written procedures for communicating with parents and students, including those who are limited-English proficient.</td>
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10. Please mark the answer that best indicates your response.

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<th>Disagree more than Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tr>
<td>Our school crisis plan includes procedures for recovering from a crisis incident, including continuing student education during an extended school closure.</td>
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11. Please mark the answer that best indicates your response.

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<th>Statement</th>
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<th>Disagree more than Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tr>
<td>Our school receives adequate support and funding to be prepared for an emergency crisis situation.</td>
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12. Please mark the answer that best indicates your response.

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<th>Disagree more than Agree</th>
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<tr>
<td>Our school practices the emergency management plan with first responders and community partners on a regular basis.</td>
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13. Please mark the answer that best indicates your response.

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<th>Disagree more than Agree</th>
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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tr>
<td>Our school emergency plan has specific provisions to address special needs students.</td>
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14. Please mark the answer that best indicates your response.

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<th>Disagree more than Agree</th>
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<td>Our school has conducted an analysis to determine safety strengths and weaknesses.</td>
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15. Please mark the answer that best indicates your response.

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<td>Our school conducts specific training for faculty and staff members on safety and emergency procedures.</td>
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16. Please mark the answer that best indicates your response.

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<th>Disagree more than Agree</th>
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<td>Faculty and staff at our school have ready access to our school crisis plan.</td>
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17. Please mark the answer that best indicates your response.

| Our school provides each classroom with an emergency crisis bag (containing items such as class roster, copy of emergency procedures, first aid supplies, flashlight, food/water) to be used in the event of an emergency. |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Agree more than Disagree | Disagree more than Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

18. Please mark the answer that best indicates your response.

| Our school is prepared with two other means of communication to be used in a crisis situation other than the school telephone system (such as cell phones, two way radios, bullhorns, etc.). |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Agree more than Disagree | Disagree more than Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

19. Please mark the answer that best indicates your response.

| As a school administrator, I have received specific professional training relative to school safety and terrorism. |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Agree more than Disagree | Disagree more than Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

20. Please mark the answer that best indicates your response.

| Our school has adequate security (including access control, perimeter security, etc.). |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Agree more than Disagree | Disagree more than Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

21. Please mark the answer that best indicates your response.

| Our school conducts simulations of actual crisis situations as part of crisis preparedness. |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Agree more than Disagree | Disagree more than Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
22. Please mark the answer that best indicates your response.

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Our school verifies the identity of service personnel and vendors visiting the school and keeps detailed records of names, organizations, vehicle information, and other identification information.

23. Please mark the answer that best indicates your response.

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The appropriate local law enforcement agency servicing our school has a copy of our school blueprints, floor plans, and diagrams.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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I believe a large scale terror attack on our school is a possibility we must prepare for.

25. Please mark the answer that best indicates your response.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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I am confident our school is prepared for emergency crisis situations including acts of terror.
Appendix F- Survey Review Letter

Principal Michael Dube
Masters Regional Academy
915 Douglas Pike
Smithfield, RI 02917

September 28, 2009

Re: Rhode Island School Crisis Preparedness Survey

Dear Mr. Dube,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the twenty-five (25) question survey you prepared as part of a program for continuing education concerning Rhode Island schools. As an employee of the Providence Fire Department for twenty-one (21) years, my experiences range from eighteen (18) years assigned to a rescue vehicle to three (3) years in the Fire Prevention Division. The former years on the rescue centered on emergency responding with my current assignment on emergency prevention. In my opinion, the survey you prepared is a fair and accurate way to determine a school’s strengths and weaknesses so that future developments and/or actions will result in a safer environment for our children.

Should you have further need of assistance please contact me @ 401-338-7219.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Timothy J. Lutz Sr.
Assistant Deputy State Fire Marshal
Appendix G- School Size Student Population Graph